THE COMMENTARY OF *HIEROCLES*, UPON THE GOLDEN VERSES OF *PYTHAGORAS*.

Tranſlated from the GREEK.

THE SECOND EDITION

CORRECTED and IMPROVED.

GLASGOW:

Printed by ROBERT URIE.

ld by T. MERRIL, bookſeller in *Cambridge*.

MDCCLVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THERE is nothing more natural than when we read any fine writings, and are charmed with them, to deſire to be acquainted with their author. Pity it is that our curioſity can be ſo little ſatisfied with what is entertaining in the life of HIEROCLES.—— What can be gleaned from antiquity, concerning him, may be compriſed in the following narrative.

OF the name of Hierocles, antiquity furniſhes us with ſeveral eminent perſonages; but the author of the philoſophical COMMENTARY upon the GOLDEN VERSES far outſhined them all. He was born about the year four hundred and ten of the Chriſtian æra, and was much of the ſame age with PROCLUS, the famous Platonic philoſopher. In his youth, he attended the lectures of the younger PLUTARCH *,

* Vide lib. de Provid. ap. Phot. cod. 214.

who died about the year four hundred and thirty-four, twenty-four years after our author was born. We know little more of HIEROCLES, till he came and ſettled at Alexandria, the reſort, at that time, of all the men of genius and letters in the world. That famous ſchool was for ſome time on its decline, when he appeared there; but, by the force of his philoſophy and eloquence, he ſoon reſtored it to its former luſtre and reputation. According to Damaſcius, who flouriſhed a little after him, and whoſe words are preſerved by Suidas, he rendered the ſchool of Alexandria ſo famous, that the youth, from all parts, aſſembled there to attend his philoſophical lectures, and were charmed, beyond meaſure, with the ſublimity of his ſentiments, and the elegance of his expreſſion, joined to the dignity of his life and manners, ſo that he was univerſally eſteemed as another PLATO. It was during that time, that, in all probability,

he compoſed his famous *Commentary* on the Golden Verſes of PYTHAGORAS. He had ſtudied the philoſophy of that eminent maſter with an uncommon degree of application, of which poſterity now feel the happy effects. He underſtood the principles of that ſchool to the bottom, and has given us, in his Commentary, the nobleſt compend of it, that ever the world was favoured with. Happy for us that it has reached our age; for without it, we ſhould have had but a ſmall inſight into the tenets of that celebrated Italic ſchool, founded by that great philoſopher. He preſerved in Alexandria, amongſt all the great men that frequented his lectures, his character and reputation, as a philoſopher, to the day of his death, which happened about the year four hundred and ſeventy-ſix, in the ſixty-ſix year of his age.

SEVERAL of his ſayings are tranſmitted to us; amongſt which the following one is remarkable. When

he was explaining PLATO, he ſaid, "that the diſcourſes of Socrates "were like dice, that always ſtand "upright, which way ſoever they "fall."

He wrote, beſides his COMMENTARY, which has come down to us entire, ſeven books upon Providence and Fate, and dedicated them to the philoſopher Olympiodorus, who, by his embaſſies, did the Romans great ſervices, under the emperors Honorius and Theodoſius the younger. But theſe books are now loſt, and we only know them by the extracts in Photius. A liſt of the reſt of his writings may be ſeen in his life wrote by Mr. Dacier, collected from the writers of that and the following age, but in a dry inelegant manner.

HIEROCLES appears, in his philoſophical COMMENTARY, to have had a clear and deep underſtanding, a ſound reaſon, an exquiſite judgment, much penetration and wiſdom, and a paſſionate love for truth;

in ſhort, a genius of the firſt rank. Theſe features drawn of him are not imaginary, but we have the pleaſure to ſee them confirmed by the teſtimony of ſome of his moſt eminent ſcholars *.—— His COMMENTARY is, undoubtedly, ſuperior to any thing of the like nature, that has reached our times, as ſhining with a genius peculiarly beautiful, a ſublimity of ſentiment, adorned, at the ſame time, with an uncommon energy and beauty of ſtile, ſo that no where are to be ſeen more ſublime ideas concerning the nature and moral character of God, and more juſt ſentiments relating to that of man.

THE following tranſlation was undertaken by a gentleman of merit, about fifty years ago, for the late Mr. Jacob Tonſon, of London, from Mr. Dacier's French tranſlation, compared with the original Greek.— In this edition the whole

* Vide Suid. de Hier.

tranſlation is accurately compared with the Greek, diligently reviſed, and almoſt new modeled. The ambiguous expreſſions are rendered clear, and a new turn given to many of the ſentences, in a more plain and eaſy manner, and, as we apprehend, more agreeable to the original. Where the text was obſcure, and ſcarce intelligible, occaſioned by an alluſion to ſome of the Pythagorean tenets, not now ſo well underſtood, we have endeavoured to illuſtrate it, in a few words, agreeable to the principles of that philoſophy, as in pages 33 and 34.— In ſhort, that nothing might be wanting to complete this edition, we have analized the whole of Hierocles's ſentiments in a GENERAL INDEX; ſo that the reader may have a view of his whole philoſophy at once. On theſe accounts, we flatter ourſelves that this tranſlation is preferable to any former one, and, we hope, will be received by the public accordingly.

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THE GOLDEN VERSES OF *PYTHAGORAS.*

Tranſlated from the GREEK,

By NICHOLAS ROWE, Eſq;

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I hope the reader will forgive the liberty I have taken in tranſlating theſe verſes ſomewhat at large, without which it would have been almoſt impoſſible to have given any kind of turn, in Engliſh poetry, to ſo dry a ſubject. The ſenſe of the author is, I hope, no where miſtaken: and if there ſeem, in ſome places, to be ſome additions in the Engliſh verſes to the Greek text, they are only ſuch as may be juſtified from HIEROCLES's COMMENTARY, *and delivered by him as the larger and explained ſenſe of the author's ſhort precept. I have, in ſome few places, ventured to differ from the learned Mr. Dacier's interpretation, as thoſe, that ſhall give themſelves the trouble of a ſtrict compariſon, will find. How far I am in the right, is left to the reader to determine.*

THE GOLDEN VERSES OF *PYTHAGORAS.*

FIRST to the gods thy humble homage pay;
The greateſt this, and firſt of laws, obey;
Perform thy vows, obſerve thy plighted troth,
And let religion bind thee to thy oath.
The heroes next demand thy juſt regard,
Renown'd on earth, and to the ſtars preferr'd,
To light and endleſs life, their virtue's ſure reward.
Due rites perform and honours to the dead,
To ev'ry wiſe, to ev'ry pious, ſhade.
With lowly duty to thy parents bow,
And grace and favour to thy kindred ſhow:
For what concerns the reſt of human-kind,
Chooſe out the man to virtue beſt inclin'd;
Him to thy arms receive, him to thy boſom bind.
Poſſeſs'd of ſuch a friend, preſerve him ſtill;
Nor thwart his counſels with thy ſtubborn will;
Pliant to all his admonitions prove,
And yield to all his offices of love:
Him from thy heart, ſo true, ſo juſtly dear,
Let no raſh word nor light offences tear.

Bear all thou canſt, ſtill with his failings ſtrive,
And to the utmoſt ſtill, and ſtill forgive;
For ſtrong neceſſity alone explores
The ſecret vigour of our latent powers,
Rouzes and urges on the lazy heart,
Force, to itſelf unknown before, t'exert.
By uſe thy ſtronger appetites aſſuage,
Thy gluttony, thy ſloth, thy luſt, thy rage:
From each diſhoneſt act of ſhame forbear;
Of others, and thyſelf, alike beware.
Let rev'rence of thyſelf thy thoughts control,
And guard the ſacred temple of thy ſoul.
Let juſtice o'er thy word and deed preſide,
And reaſon ev'n thy meaneſt actions guide:
For know that death is man's appointed doom,
Know that the day of great account will come,
When thy paſt life ſhall ſtrictly be ſurvey'd,
Each word, each deed, be in the balance laid,
And all the good and all the ill moſt juſtly be repaid.
For wealth, the periſhing, uncertain good,
Ebbing and flowing like the fickle flood,
That knows no ſure, no fix'd abiding place,
But wand'ring, loves from hand to hand to paſs;
Revolve the getter's joy and loſer's pain,
And think if it be worth thy while to gain.
Of all thoſe ſorrows that attend mankind,
With patience bear the lot to thee aſſign'd;
Nor think it chance, nor murmur at the load;
For know what man calls fortune is from God.

In what thou may'ſt, from wiſdom ſeek relief,
And let her healing hand aſſuage thy grief;
Yet ſtill whate'er the righteous doom ordains,
What cauſe ſoever multiplies thy pains,
Let not thoſe pains as ills be underſtood;
For God delights not to afflict the good.

The reaſoning art, to various ends apply'd,
Is oft a ſure, but oft an erring guide.
Thy judgment therefore ſound and cool preſerve,
Nor lightly from thy reſolution ſwerve;
The dazling pomp of words does oft deceive,
And ſweet perſuaſion wins the eaſy to believe.

When fools and liars labour to perſuade,
Be dumb, and let the bablers vainly plead.

This above all, this precept chiefly learn,
This nearly does, and firſt, thyſelf concern;
Let not example, let no ſoothing tongue,
Prevail upon thee with a Siren's ſong,
To do thy ſoul's immortal eſſence wrong.
Of good and ill by words or deeds expreſt,
Chooſe for thyſelf, and always chooſe the beſt.

Let wary thought each enterprize forerun,
And ponder on thy taſk before begun,
Leſt folly ſhould the wretched work deface,
And mock thy fruitleſs labours with diſgrace.
Fools huddle on and always are in haſte,
Act without thought, and thoughtleſs words they waſte.
But thou, in all thou doſt, with early cares
Strive to prevent at firſt a fate like theirs;

That ſorrow on the end may never wait,
Nor ſharp repentance make thee wiſe too late.
Beware thy meddling hand in ought to try,
That does beyond thy reach of knowlege lie;
But ſeek to know, and bend thy ſerious thought
To ſearch the profitable knowlege out.
So joys on joys for ever ſhall increaſe,
Wiſdom ſhall crown thy labours, and ſhall bleſs
Thy life with pleaſure, and thy end with peace.
Nor let the body want it's part, but ſhare
A juſt proportion of thy tender care:
For health and welfare prudently provide,
And let it's lawful wants be all ſupply'd.
Let ſober draughts refreſh, and wholſome fare
Decaying nature's waſted force repair;
And ſprightly exerciſe the duller ſpirits chear.
In all things ſtill which to this care belong,
Obſerve this rule, to guard thy ſoul from wrong.
By virtuous uſe thy life and manners frame,
Manly and ſimply pure, and free from blame.
Provoke not envy's deadly rage, but fly
The glancing curſe of her malicious eye.
Seek not in needleſs luxury to waſte
Thy wealth and ſubſtance, with a ſpendthrift's haſte;
Yet flying theſe, be watchful, leſt thy mind,
Prone to extremes, an equal danger find,
And be to ſordid avarice inclin'd.
Diſtant alike from each, to neither lean,
But ever keep the happy GOLDEN MEAN.

Be careful ſtill to guard thy ſoul from wrong,
And let thy thought prevent thy hand and tongue.
Let not the ſtealing God of ſleep ſurprize,
Nor creep in ſlumbers on thy weary eyes,
Ere ev'ry action of the former day
Strictly thou doſt and righteouſly ſurvey.
With rev'rence at thy own tribunal ſtand,
And anſwer juſtly to thy own demand.
Where have I been? in what have I tranſgreſs'd?
What good or ill has this day's life expreſs'd?
Where have I fail'd in what I ought to do?
In what to God, to man, or to myſelf, I owe?
Inquire ſevere what-e'er from firſt to laſt,
From morning's dawn 'till ev'ning's gloom, has paſt,
If evil were thy deeds, repent and mourn,
And let thy ſoul with ſtrong remorſe be torn.
If good, the good with peace of mind repay,
And to thy ſecret ſelf with pleaſure ſay,
Rejoice, my heart, for all went well to-day.
Theſe thoughts and chiefly theſe thy mind ſhould
Employ thy ſtudy, and engage thy love. [move,
Theſe are the rules which will to virtue lead,
And teach thy feet her heav'nly paths to tread.
This by his name I ſwear, whoſe ſacred lore
Firſt to mankind explain'd the myſtic FOUR,
Source of eternal nature and almighty power.
In all thou doſt, firſt, let thy prayers aſcend,
And to the gods thy labours firſt commend:
From them implore ſucceſs, and hope a proſp'rous end.

So ſhall thy abler mind be taught to ſoar,
And wiſdom in her ſecret ways explore;
To range through heaven above and earth below,
Immortal gods and mortal men to know.
So ſhalt thou learn what power does all control,
What bounds the parts, and what unites the whole:
And rightly judge, in all this wondrous frame,
How univerſal nature is the ſame;
So ſhalt thou ne'er thy vain affections place
On hopes of what ſhall never come to paſs.
Man, wretched man! thou ſhalt be taught to know,
Who bears within himſelf the inborn cauſe of woe.
Unhappy race! that never yet could tell,
How near their good and happineſs they dwell.
Depriv'd of ſenſe, they neither hear nor ſee;
Fetter'd in vice, they ſeek not to be free,
But ſtupid, to their own ſad fate agree;
Like pond'rous rolling-ſtones oppreſs'd with ill,
The weight that loads them makes them roll on ſtill,
Bereſt of choice and freedom of the will.
For native ſtrife in ev'ry boſom reigns,
And ſecretly an impious war maintains:
Provoke not this, but let the combat ceaſe,
And ev'ry yielding paſſion ſue for peace.
Wouldſt thou, great Jove, thou father of mankind,
Reveal the Demon for that taſk aſſign'd,
The wretched race an end of woes would find.
And yet be bold, O man! divine thou art,
And of the gods celeſtial eſſence part.

Nor ſacred nature is from thee conceal'd,
But to thy race her myſtic rules reveal'd.
Theſe if to know thou happily attain,
Soon ſhalt thou perfect be in all that I ordain.
Thy wounded ſoul to health thou ſhalt reſtore,
And free from ev'ry pain ſhe felt before.

Abſtain, I warn, from meats unclean and foul,
So keep thy body pure, ſo free thy ſoul;
So rightly judge; thy reaſon, ſo, maintain;
Reaſon! which heav'n did for thy guide ordain,
Let that beſt reaſon ever hold the rein.

Then if this mortal body thou forſake,
And thy glad flight to the pure aether take,
Among the gods exalted ſhalt thou ſhine,
Immortal, incorruptible, divine:
The tyrant death ſecurely ſhalt thou brave,
And ſcorn the dark dominion of the grave.

THE COMMENTARY OF *HIEROCLES*, ON THE GOLDEN VERSES OF *PYTHAGORAS*.

PHILOSOPHY is the purification and perfection of human nature. The purification, as it weans our affections from too keen a purſuit of the objects of matter, and the low appetites of the mortal body: the perfection, in that it recovers the ſoul to its original happineſs, by reſtoring it to a reſemblance of the Divinity. Now, virtue and truth alone can operate theſe two things; virtue, by calming the unruly diſorders of the paſſions; and truth, by diſpelling the darkneſs of error, and introducing the divine form to ſuch as are diſpoſed to receive it.

For this ſcience therefore, which muſt render us pure and perfect, it is good to have ſhort and certain rules, to be as ſo many aphoriſms of the art; that by their means, in an orderly and eaſy progreſs, we may arrive at happineſs, which is the ſole end of our being.

Among all the rules that contain a ſummary of philoſophy, the verſes of Pythagoras, called, THE GOLDEN VERSES, juſtly hold the firſt rank; for they contain the general precepts of all philoſophy, as well for what regards the active, as the contemplative, life. By their means every one may acquire truth and virtue, render himſelf pure, happily attain to the divine reſemblance, and, as is ſaid in the Timæus of Plato, whom we are to regard as a very exact maſter of the doctrine of Pythagoras, after having regained his health, and recovered his integrity and his perfection, he may ſee himſelf again in his primitive ſtate of innocence and of light.

Pythagoras begins with the precepts of active virtue. For we muſt firſt ſubdue our inward diſorders, and diſſipate all ſluggiſhneſs from off our minds, before we can apply ourſelves to the knowlege of divine things. For, as an eye that is diſeaſed, and not yet healed of its fluxion, cannot behold a dazling and

reſplendent light; in like manner, a ſoul, that is ſtill deſtitute of virtue, cannot fix its view on the beauty and ſplendor of truth; nor is it lawful for impurity to touch the things that are pure.

Practical philoſophy is the parent of virtue, and contemplative of truth, as we are taught by theſe very verſes of Pythagoras, where practical philoſophy is called Human Virtue, and where the contemplative is celebrated under the name of Divine Virtue: for, after having finiſhed the precepts of civil virtue in theſe words; "Take care "to practiſe all theſe things, meditate on "them well; you ought to love them "with all your heart;" he adds, "It is they "that will put you in the way of divine vir-"tue, and make you walk in the footſteps "of God."

The firſt ſtep therefore to the divine nature, is to aſcend to the dignity of the human. Now, that which makes a man good, is civil virtue; but that which deifies him, are thoſe ſciences which advance him to the divine. According then to the rules of order, little things muſt precede the greater, if we would make any progreſs.—And this is the reaſon why in theſe verſes of Pythagoras, moral inſtitutions have the firſt place, to

teach us, that the practice of virtue, which is ſo neceſſary in this life, is the way whereby we ought to advance and riſe even to the divine image. And the order and deſign propoſed in theſe verſes, is to give to thoſe that read them the true character of philoſophy, before they are initiated in the other ſciences.

They are called GOLDEN VERSES, to ſignify to us that they are the moſt excellent and moſt divine of any in this kind: in like manner as we call "the golden age," the age that produced the greateſt men; and deſcribe the difference of the manners of the ſeveral ages by the analogical qualities of metals. For gold being the pureſt of all metals, and free from all the droſſy mixtures that are found in the other metals that are inferior to it, as ſilver, iron, and braſs, is therefore the moſt excellent, as being the only metal that never breeds any ruſt; whereas the others grow ruſty in proportion to the quantity of droſs they have in them. Ruſt, therefore, being the figure and emblem of vice, it was but reaſonable that the age in which ſanctity and purity reigned, and that was exempt from all corruption of manners, ſhould be called, "the age of gold." And thus theſe verſes, being every way eminently good, have juſtly deſerved the appellation of

VERSES GOLDEN and divine: for we find not in them, as in all other poems, one good verſe and another that is not ſo; but they are all perfectly good; they all equally ſet forth purity of manners, lead us to the participation of the divine likeneſs, and diſcover the moſt perfect aim of the Pythagorean philoſophy, as will evidently appear by the explication we are going to give of each verſe in particular. Let us then begin with the firſt.

VERSE I.

In the firſt place, honour the IMMORTAL GODS, as they are eſtabliſhed and ordained by the law.

SEEING the piety that relates to the divine cauſe, is the chief and the guide of all the virtues, the precept concerning it is, with good reaſon, placed at the head of all the laws preſcribed by theſe verſes: that we ought to honour the gods of this univerſe according to the order in which they are eſtabliſhed, and which the eternal law, that produced them, diſtributed to them with their eſſences, placing ſome of them in the firſt

ſphere of heaven, others in the ſecond, others in the third, and ſo on, till all the celeſtial globes were filled up. For to acknowlege and honour them according to the order and ſtation in which they were placed by their creator and father, is to obey the divine law, and to render them truly all the honour due to them: nor ought we to extol their dignity above meaſure, any more than to entertain diminiſhing thoughts of them; but to take them for what they are, to give them the rank they have received, and to refer all the honour we render them to God alone who created them, and who may properly be called the God of gods; that is, the ſupreme God. For the only way we have to diſcover and comprehend the majeſty of this excellent Being who created the world, is to be fully convinced that he is the cauſe of the gods, and the creator of the rational and immutable ſubſtances. Theſe are the ſubſtances, theſe the gods we here call Immortal Gods, who always, and in equal manner, contemplate the great God their maker, and are conſtantly intent upon his goodneſs; ſo that they are ſecure from either change or ſeparation, being, as it were, the images of the all-productive Cauſe, neither diſturbed with paſſion, nor tainted with

evil. For it is fit that God ſhould have produced ſuch images of himſelf, as were not capable of change, or of corrupting themſelves by their inclinations to ill, as are the ſouls of men, who are the laſt of all intelligent ſubſtances, as thoſe that are called Immortal Gods are the firſt.

It is alſo to diſtinguiſh them from the ſouls of men, that we here call them Immortal Gods, becauſe they never die as to the divine life, and never forget one ſingle moment, neither their own eſſence nor the goodneſs of the father who created them: for, conſider the paſſions and alterations to which the ſoul of man is ſubject; ſometimes it remembers its God, and the dignity in which it was created; and anon it intirely forgets both the one and the other. And for this reaſon the ſouls of men may juſtly be called Mortal Gods, as dying ſometimes to the divine life by their going aſtray from God, and ſometimes recovering it again by their return to him; living thus, in this laſt ſenſe, a life divine; and in the other, dying, as much as it is poſſible that an immortal eſſence ſhould participate of death; not by ceaſing to be, but by degenerating from the excellency of life. For the death of a reaſonable eſſence is ignorance and impiety, which drag after them the diſorders

and revolt of the paſſions *. The ignorance of good neceſſarily plunges us into the ſlavery of ill; a ſlavery from whence it is impoſſible to be redeemed, but by returning to knowlege and to God, which is done by recollection and by the faculty of reminiſcency.

Now, between theſe immortal and mortal gods, as I have called them, there is a neceſſity there ſhould be an eſſence ſuperior to man, and inferior to God, to be, as it were, a medium and a link to chain the two extremes to one another, to the end the whole intelligent eſſence might be bound and united together.

This middle eſſence is never altogether ignorant of God; neither has it always an equally immutable and permanent knowlege of him, but ſometimes a greater, ſometimes a leſs. Now, in regard it has always an actual knowlege of God, it excels the human nature; but yet as it is mutable and unequal, it falls ſhort of the divine. And this middle ſtation it holds by the law of its conſtitution, neither for its proficiency advanced above the human, nor for its negligence degraded be-

* This fine ſentiment falleth nothing ſhort of that elevated one of the apoſtle Paul, Eph. ii. 1. where he likeneth bad men to perſons that are dead. "You hath "he quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins."

low the divine nature. For all the intelligent part of the creation bears the image of their maker, God. But thoſe of the firſt rank are the pure image; thoſe of the middle, the middle image; thoſe of the third, the laſt image of the Divinity. Of theſe three orders of beings, the firſt is here called IMMORTAL GODS; the ſecond, ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES; and the third, TERRESTRIAL DEMONS; as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

Let us now return to what we were ſaying. What is the law? What the order that is conformable to it? And laſtly, what is the honour rendered in regard to this order and to this law?

By the law here, is to be underſtood the all-producing Mind, and the divine will, to which every thing continually owes its production and conſervation.—The order conformable to this law, is the rank which God, the father and creator of all things, gave the immortal gods, when he created them, and that appoints ſome of them to be firſt, others ſecond. For, though, as being the firſt in all this intelligent order, they have received whatever is moſt excellent, they are different nevertheleſs among themſelves, and ſome are more, ſome leſs divine than the others: and a mark of the ſuperiority, and of the inferi-

ority of ſome of them in regard to the others, is the rank and order of the celeſtial ſpheres, which were diſtributed among them according to their eſſence, and to their power or virtue: inſomuch that the law relates only to their eſſence; and the order is only the rank that was given them ſuitable to their dignity. For neither were they created fortuitouſly, nor ſeparated and placed by chance, but they were created and placed with order, as different parts and different members of one ſingle *whole*, which is heaven, and as preſerving their connexion in their ſeparation and in their union according to their kind, ſo that no change, no diſplacing, can be imagined in their ſituation without the intire ruin of the world, which can never happen, ſo long as the firſt Cauſe, that produced them, continues immutable and firm in his decrees, and has a power equal to his being: as long as he ſhall poſſeſs a goodneſs not acquired, but inherent and eſſential to him, and as long as for the love of himſelf, he ſhall promote the good and happineſs of all things. For no other reaſonable cauſe of the creation of things can be alleged, than the eſſential goodneſs of God: it is God who is all good by his nature; and what is good is never ſuſceptible of any the leaſt envy. All the other cauſes

that are aſſigned of the creation of the univerſe, except the ſole goodneſs of God, ſavour more of the neceſſities and of the wants of men, than of the independency of almighty God.

Now God, being all good by nature, produced firſt the beings that moſt reſembled himſelf; ſecondly, thoſe of a middle likeneſs to him; thirdly, thoſe, who, of all the beings that reſemble him, participate the leaſt of his divine image.

This order was regulated according to the eſſence of all theſe created beings, inſomuch that what is more perfect is preferred to the leſs perfect, not only in all the kinds, but likewiſe in the different ſpecies of each kind: for it was neither by chance, nor by change of choice and of will, that all things received their place and their rank; but having been created different by the Law that produced them, they have the rank that beſt agrees with the dignity of their nature: therefore this precept, " Honour them as they are " placed and diſpoſed by the law," ought to be underſtood not only of the immortal gods, but alſo of the illuſtrious heroes, and of the ſouls of men: for under each genus there is an infinite number of ſpecies, placed and diſpoſed according to their greater or leſs dig-

nity. And thus you ſee what is the nature, and what the order or rank of intelligent beings.

What is then the law, and what the honour that is the conſequence of it? Let us repeat it once again: the law is the immutable power of God, according to which he created the divine eſſences, and ranked and placed them from all eternity in an order they can never change. And the honour conformable to this law is the knowlege of the nature of theſe beings which we honour, and the likeneſs, which, as much as poſſible, we labour to have with them: for whatever we love, we imitate as much as we can: and the honour we render to him who has no need of any thing, conſiſts in receiving the good things he offers us. For we do not honour God by giving him any thing, but by rendering ourſelves worthy to receive from him; and, as the Pythagoreans ſay, "We "will honour God perfectly, if we behave "ourſelves ſo, that our ſouls may become "his image." Every man who honours God by gifts, as a being that has need of them, falls abſurdly into the error of believing himſelf greater or more powerful than God. Even the magnificence of gifts and offerings is no honour to God, unleſs beſtow-

ed by a heart truly devout and ſincere: for the gifts and the victims of fools are only fewel for the flames, and their offerings but a bait for the ſacrilegious. But a mind truly pious and upright, and ſufficiently ſtrengthened and confirmed in love, unites itſelf to God; for every thing, of neceſſity, muſt have a tendency to its like. For this reaſon it is ſaid, that the wiſe and pious man is the only ſacrificer; that he alone is the friend of God, and knows only how to addreſs him: for he alone knows how to honour, who never confounds the dignity of thoſe he honours, who offers himſelf firſt as a pure ſacrifice, who renders his ſoul the image of God, and who prepares his mind as a temple worthy to receive the divine light. What can we offer to God of all the earthly and material things here below, that can be his true image? or, what gift will we make him, that can be intimately united to him, as it muſt neceſſarily happen to an intelligent being, that is purified and refined from ſenſual appetites? And indeed, as the ſame philoſophers ſay, "God "has not upon earth a place more fit for "him to dwell in, than a pure ſoul." Which agrees perfectly with this oracle of the Pythian Apollo, "I dwell with leſs pleaſure in

" the reſplendent heavens, than in the ſouls " of pious men."

Now, the pious man is he, who having the knowlege of God, offers his own perfections, as the greateſt honour he can render to the cauſe of all good: who, through an ardent deſire to acquire them, addreſſes himſelf without ceaſing to thoſe who can beſtow them, and who, by rendering himſelf always worthy to receive them, perfectly honours thoſe who are continually giving them. Every man who thinks to honour God in any other manner, and not by himſelf, and by the thoughts of his heart, makes this honour conſiſt in a uſeleſs profuſion of exterior goods, and endeavours to acquit himſelf of this duty towards God, not by offering him piety and virtue, but by giving him temporal and periſhable goods: and yet theſe are gifts that even a good man could not receive with pleaſure, ſeeing they are not attended with the requiſite diſpoſitions in the giver. To this purpoſe again take another anſwer of the Pythian Apollo, which deſerves to be recorded. A man, having immolated a hecatomb, without any ſentiments of piety, enquired of the god how he accepted his ſacrifice. The god anſwered him thus: " The barley-cake " alone, that the famous Hermioneus of-

"offered, was more acceptable to me:" thereby giving us to know, that he preferred before that magnificent, even the meaneſt offering, becauſe its worth was enhanced by the ſentiments of true piety *. With piety every thing is agreeable to God; without it nothing can pleaſe him.

We have ſaid enough of piety for the preſent. But as a conſtant and exact obſervance preſerves the law of the order of this univerſe; and as it was the cuſtom of the antients to call the guard or keeper of this obſervance OATH, from a myſterious and unutterable name; it is but reaſon that after the precepts relating to the Gods, ſhould follow that concerning the Oath, which has a neceſſary dependency thereon.

* This thought is admirably well expreſſed by Perſius in theſe verſes.

Compoſitum jus faſque animo, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, et incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto:
Haec cedo ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo.
Sat. 2.

A ſoul, where ſettled virtue reigns enſhrin'd;
Where juſtice dwells, with ſanctity combin'd;
Within whoſe inmoſt cloſe receſſes lie
Tinctures of generous honour's deepeſt dye.
Such is the ſacrifice the gods demand:
A cake ſuffices, from a ſpotleſs hand.
BREWSTER.

VERSE II.

Honour the OATH with all manner of religion.

WE have ſhewn that the Law is the power of God; by which he operates and brings all things to paſs immutably and from eternity. And here, in conſequence of this law we ſay, that the Oath is the cauſe that preſerves all things in the ſame ſtate, they being made firm and ſtable by the faith of the Oath, and preſerving thereby the order eſtabliſhed by the law, ſo that the unchangeable diſpoſition of all the created beings is only the effect of the law that produced them, and of the oath that maintains and ſecures them. For that all created beings continue as they were diſpoſed and ſet in order by the law, is the chief work, and the firſt effect of the divine oath, which is above all, and always obſerved by thoſe whoſe thoughts are continually bent on God; but is often violated by ſuch as think not always on him, and who ſometimes forget him. And indeed, they violate the oath in proportion as they withdraw and go aſtray from God, and keep it proportionably as they return again

to him: for, by the oath in this place is meant only the obſervance of the divine laws, and the band by which all created beings are linked to God the creator, to the end they may know him. Among which creatures, ſuch, as are always united to him, honour always the oath; and they that ſometimes apoſtatize from him, thereby render themſelves impious violators of this oath, not only by tranſgreſſing the order of the divine law, but alſo by breaking the faith of the divine oath: and ſuch is the oath that we may call innate and eſſential to intelligent beings, to keep themſelves always united to God their father and creator, and never once to tranſgreſs the laws that he has eſtabliſhed.

But the oath, to which men have recourſe in the affairs of the civil life, is the ſhadow, and, as it were, the tranſcript of this original oath, and it leads directly to truth thoſe that make uſe of it as they ought: for diſſipating the ambiguity and uncertainty of the deſigns of men, it renders them plain and certain; it fixes and forces them to continue ſuch as they are declared to be, either in words or in actions, by diſcovering, on one hand, the truth of what is already done, and by exacting and ſecuring, on the other, what is yet to do. Thus you ſee the great

reaſon why oaths ought above all things to be religiouſly obſerved. The firſt, which precedes by its eſſence, claims our reſpect and obſervance, as the pledge of eternity; and the human oath, which is a certain help to us in the affairs of life, ought to be reſpected as the image of the firſt, and as that, which, next to the divine oath, is the ſafeſt depoſitary of certainty and of truth, and that adorns and enriches, with every excellent virtue, all that have learned to reſpect it.

Now, the reſpect, due to an oath, is the moſt faithful and moſt inviolable obſervance that poſſibly can be, of what we have ſworn: and this obſervance is the virtue that aſſociates and unites, with the firm ſtability and truth of the divine habitude, thoſe that reſpect and keep their oaths, out of a neceſſity wholly free and wholly voluntary.

The unſpeakable ſanctity of the firſt oath may be recovered by a ſincere converſion to God, when, by inward goodneſs, we heal the breach of this divine oath: but the ſacredneſs and fidelity of a human oath is preſerved by politic virtues; for they alone, who poſſeſs thoſe virtues, can be faithful in the oaths of civil life; and vice, the parent of infidelity and of perjury, tramples oaths under foot through the inſtability and incon-

ſtancy of manners. The covetous man, can he be faithful, when he is to receive or pay money? The intemperate and the coward, can they religiouſly obſerve their oaths? Will not either of them, whenever they believe it will be for their advantage, caſt off all reſpect for what they have ſworn to perform, and renounce eternal happineſs for the enjoyment of frail and temporal goods? But they, who never deviate from the paths of virtue, are alone capable to preſerve the reſpect that the majeſty of an oath requires. Now, the moſt certain way, inviolably to preſerve this reſpect, is not to make uſe of oaths frequently nor raſhly, nor by chance, nor for things of little concern, nor as an ornament of diſcourſe, nor the more to aſcertain what you ſay; but to reſerve it for things neceſſary and honourable, and for thoſe occaſions only where there appears to be no other way of ſafety for you, in your affairs, than by the truth of an oath. And the only way to convince all that hear us of the truth of what we affirm, is ſo to behave ourſelves, that our manners may agree with our oaths, and not to give our neighbour any cauſe to ſuſpect that we are capable of preferring any temporal advantage what-

ever before truth, whether we have, or have not obliged ourſelves by an oath.

This precept, "reſpect thy oath," commands us not only to be true and faithful in our oaths, but likewiſe to abſtain from ſwearing; for not to ſwear too frequently, is the ſureſt way to ſwear always true. A habit of ſwearing eaſily plunges us into perjury, but he that ſwears ſeldom, generally keeps his oath; for either he ſwears not at all, or if he ſwears, he is true and faithful. His tongue never runs, as we ſay, before his wit; and never prevents reflection by an unlucky habit of ſwearing; and his mind ſuffers not itſelf to be ſeduced and corrupted by the violent tranſports of the paſſions. The mind is guided and governed by an inward ſenſe of virtue, and the tongue is kept in awe by abſtaining from ſwearing. Now, the faithful obſervance of an oath agrees perfectly with the honour the firſt verſe commands us to pay the gods; for it is the inſeparable companion of piety. Thus an oath is the guard and ſecurity of the divine law for the order and diſpoſition of the univerſe.

Honour then this law, by being obedient to what it commands; and reſpect an oath, by declining the frequent uſe of it; for the truth of an oath is no ſmall part of piety.—

But we have ſaid enough concerning the firſt beings, concerning the divine law, which is the author of order, and concerning the oath, which is the conſequence of that law. Now, becauſe, next to the immortal gods, we ought to honour the beings we call angelical, the author of theſe verſes goes on;

VERSE III.

In the next place, honour the ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES.

THESE are the middle ſort of intelligent beings, who, holding the next place after the immortal gods *, precede human nature, and join together the laſt with the firſt. To theſe then, as holding the ſecond place, we ought to render the ſecond honours; underſtanding likewiſe of them the precept of "honouring as ordained by law:" for the whole virtue of this honour lies in the right knowlege of the nature of thoſe we honour, whereby is diſcovered what is ſuitable to be ſaid or done, toward worſhipping them

* The higheſt order; being, according to Hierocles, the firſt after God himſelf. Why they are called GODS, and IMMORTAL, he ſheweth afterwards.

aright: for, how can one rightly addreſs himſelf to them he knoweth not? and how ſhall he offer them a ſuitable preſent, to whoſe merit he is an abſolute ſtranger? The firſt, therefore, and true honour, in regard even of thoſe illuſtrious heroes, is the knowlege of their eſſence, and of their rank; and an exact diſcernment of their employments, and the perfection they contribute to this univerſe, in conſequence thereof. According therefore to their natures, ought we, in all things, to proportion the adoration we pay them: and this proceedeth only from our knowlege of them: for when once we thoroughly know the nature of each being, and what rank it holdeth, then, but not till then, will we render them due honour, purſuant to the law.

Moreover, we are to honour none of thoſe natures that are inferior to the human; but only theſe, on the one hand, who excel mankind, being by nature ſuperior to them *; and thoſe, on the other, who, although once on a level with human kind, yet have raiſed themſelves above them by the pre-eminence of virtue †.

* The immortal gods ſpoken of before.
† The illuſtrious heroes.

Now, of all the beings ſuperior to us by nature, the very firſt and beſt is God, the great Creator, who is to be worſhipped and adored incomparably beyond all. Again, thoſe of the firſt rank in the world, are they, who being of God, and next to him, meditate of him without variableneſs or turning, and repreſent the divine image impreſſed on them, by the creative cauſe, without the leaſt blemiſh or imperfection. And theſe in the verſe are called IMMORTAL GODS, becauſe they never die, and never put off the divine likeneſs, but retain the ſame uniformly and unchangeably. Thoſe, again, are of the middle degree both in nature and honour, which are here called ILLUSTRIOUS HEROES, having a conſtant knowlege of their maker, and ſhining with him in a happy life, but not invariably and in the ſame manner. For, in that they are united, as a middle link, to God, and have received an invariable converſion toward him, they move about him with inequal motions, and at once divide and re-unite, by their own multiplied knowlege, the united contemplation of the firſt beings *, making the end of the intimate

* He here calls the contemplation of the firſt beings, or thoſe next in order after God, *united*, in alluſion to the Pythagoric doctrine of NUMBERS; which

knowlege of theſe, the beginning of their own initiation *.

They are therefore with reaſon called "illuſtrious heroes;" the epithet that ſignifies ILLUSTRIOUS, intimating to us, by its root, that they are full of goodneſs and of underſtanding; and the word HEREOES coming from a

taught, that the nearer any thing came to the *principle*, or the fewer removes it were from the *unit*, it was the more perfect, and liker to it. —— And the knowlege of the illuſtrious heroes, he terms *multiplied*, in alluſion to the ſame doctrine. As the former are in rank neareſt God, (who may be called *the unit*) and reſemble him moſt, ſo their knowlege of him is immediate and *united*; that is to ſay, perfect. And as the latter, viz. the illuſtrious heroes, are at a greater remove from God, the *unit*, their knowlege is neither ſo immediate, nor *united*, but is *multiplied*, by paſſing through intermediate gods to them, (according to the pagan doctrine.) All this is included in the original words ἡνωμενην, and πεπληθυσμενην: the former derived from a word which ſignifies *one*, or *unit*; the latter coming from another which ſignifies *multitude*.

* This refers to the Eleuſinian myſteries. —— There were two ſorts of initiates into theſe, the one called [ἐποπται,] *intimates*, or ſuch as had a full inſpection into the myſteries; the other [μυσαι,] *initiates*, or thoſe newly come to the profeſſion. Hierocles here compareth the different knowlege of the immortals and illuſtrious heroes, to the different knowlege of thoſe two ſorts of initiates. The one is *intimate*, the other not ſo.— Εποπτειας --- μυησεως, --- are the words in the original; the former, referring to the ἐποπται, the latter, to the μυσαι, already explained.

word that ſignifies LOVE, to ſhew us that, full of love for God, their whole endeavours are to aſſiſt us in our paſſage through this terreſtrial life to a life divine, and to help us to become citizens of heaven. They are likewiſe called GOOD DEMONS, as being inſtructed and knowing in the divine laws: and ſometimes we give them the name of ANGELS, becauſe they declare and announce to us the rules that will aſſiſt us to live well here, and lead us to happineſs hereafter. Sometimes too according to theſe three ſenſes, we divide into three claſſes all thoſe middle ſpirits. Thoſe that approach the neareſt to the celeſtial and divine eſſences, we call ANGELS: thoſe that are united to the terreſtrial eſſences, we call HEROES: and thoſe that hold the middle place, equally diſtant from the two extremes, we call DEMONS; as Plato frequently divides them. Others give to this middle kind but one of theſe three names, calling them either ANGELS, or DEMONS, or HEROES; for the reaſons we have already given: and thus the author of theſe verſes has done, calling them "illuſtrious heroes:" for they are, in regard to the firſt kind, as the light in reſpect of fire, and as the father in regard to the ſon; therefore they are celebrated, and with juſtice too, as the children of God; for

they are not born of mortal race, but are produced by their uniform and only cauſe, as light comes from the eſſence of a luminous body: I mean a pure and clear light, after which it is eaſy to imagine a light full of ſhades and blended with darkneſs. And to this obſcure and dim light analogically anſwers the third kind of beings, I mean, mankind; by reaſon of the proneneſs they have to vice and to oblivion, which makes them incapable always to contemplate on God. They are inferior to the beings that always think on him, becauſe they ceaſe ſometimes to have him in their thoughts; and this is their darkneſs: but they are ſuperior to the beings void of reaſon, becauſe they return ſometimes to think on God, and are now and then reſtored to the divine knowlege, when they join themſelves to the celeſtial choirs, by laying aſide all carnal affections, and diſingaging themſelves from the corruption of the body; and this is their light. He, who is favoured with this inward light, becomes worthy of our homage and reſpect, as having adorned and raiſed up the equality of our nature, by the participation he has gained with what is moſt excellent. Now, every man that loves God, ought likewiſe to love every being that any ways reſembleth

him, whether it has poſſeſſed this likeneſs from all eternity, or has acquired it in time, as all men have, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the pre-eminence of their virtues: concerning whom the following verſe gives us this precept:

VERSE IV.

Honour likewiſe the TERRESTRIAL DEMONS, by rendering them the worſhip lawfully due to them.

THE author of theſe verſes, ſpeaking of the ſouls of men, who are adorned with truth and with virtue, calls them DEMONS, as being full of knowlege and of light; and afterwards to diſtinguiſh them from the demons that are ſuch by nature, and that hold the middle rank, as has been ſaid already, he adds the epithet TERRESTRIAL, to ſhew that they can converſe with man, inform and animate mortal bodies, and dwell upon the earth. By calling them DEMONS, he diſtinguiſhes them from wicked and impious men, who are very ignorant, and conſequently far from being demons; and by adding the epithet TERRESTRIAL, he diſtinguiſhes them

from thoſe that are always full of light and of knowlege, and who are not of a nature to live upon the earth, nor to animate mortal bodies: for, this name of TERRESTRIAL DEMON is applicable only to him, who being man by nature, is become demon by habitude, by his union, and by his knowlege in the things relating to God. The third ſort is called purely and properly TERRESTRIAL DEMONS, as being the laſt of the reaſonable ſubſtances, and intirely addicted to a terreſtrial life: for the firſt ſort is celeſtial, and the ſecond or middle ſort is æthereal. Thus, therefore, all men being terreſtrial, that is to ſay, holding the third and laſt rank among the intelligent ſubſtances, and not being all of them demons, that is to ſay, indowed with knowlege and underſtanding, the author of theſe verſes was in the right to join theſe two names, TERRESTRIAL DEMONS, to ſignify wiſe and virtuous men; for all men are not wiſe, and all the wiſe are not men: the heroes and the immortal gods, who, by their nature, are much ſuperior to men, being likewiſe indowed with wiſdom and with virtue.

This verſe therefore commands us to reſpect and revere the men that have been admitted into the celeſtial orders; who may be conſidered as equal to the demons, to the

angels, and to the heroes; for we are not to imagine that we are here adviſed to reſpect and honour any vile and contemptible ſort of demons, as the common acceptation of the word "terreſtrial demon" might be apt to perſuade us. For, in a word, all the beings that are inferior to human nature ought in no wiſe to be honoured by thoſe who are touched with the love of God, and who have a ſenſe of their nobleneſs and dignity; nor are we to honour man himſelf, next to the ſuperior beings, unleſs he have rendered himſelf like them, and be received into the divine choir. What is then the honour and reſpect we owe them? "To render them," ſays this verſe, "the worſhip lawfully due to "them:" and this worſhip conſiſts only in obeying the precepts they have left us, and in regarding thoſe precepts as laws that muſt not be violated; to take example by their way of living, and to walk in the paths they walked in, which envy could never hinder them from teaching us, and which they have tranſmitted to their ſucceſſors with ten thouſand toils and labours, as the immortal inheritance of their fathers, by conſigning to us in their writings, the elements of virtue, and the maxims of truth. To obey their precepts, and to conform our life to theirs, is honour-

ing them more truly and more effectually, than if we made on their tombs the moſt exquiſite libations, and offered to them the moſt magnificent ſacrifices.

Thus you ſee what is the honour we owe to the ſupreme beings; an honour, which, beginning with the Creator, and paſſing from him to the middle beings, which are the ætherial and heavenly, ends and terminates in the men who have been good and virtuous. But becauſe the next duty incumbent on us, in the courſe of our civil life, is the honour we owe our parents and relations, who, though they be not abſolutely in this degree of perfection and of virtue, nevertheleſs merit and claim our reſpects, in regard to the dignity of our affinity to them, the author adds the following pecept:

VERSE V.

Honour, likewiſe, your PARENTS, and thoſe who are your neareſt RELATIONS.

THE author having in the foregoing precept commanded us to honour and revere good and virtuous men, as divine beings who enjoy eternal felicity, comes, in the

next place, to exhort us to honour our parents, and thoſe that are any ways related to us, upon the ſame neceſſity of kindred. For, as of the ſuperior beings, the celeſtial ſtand us inſtead of parents, and the heroes of relations, by means of the band and union that has been and is between them and us from all eternity; ſo our fathers and our mothers, and their relations next of blood, and who for that reaſon ought to receive from us the firſt honours after our parents, are the ſame thing to us in this mortal life. How then ſhall we honour them? Shall we behave ourſelves in all things as they would have us, ſo as neither to think nor do any thing but what will pleaſe them? By this means our zeal for virtue will degenerate into zeal for vice, if our parents and relations happen to be wicked and vicious. But on the other hand, ſhall we neglect and contemn them becauſe we know them to be vicious? How then are we obedient to this law? Can we, by not honouring our parents, who are the image of the gods, nor our relations, who repreſent to us the heroes; can we, I ſay, be other than impious to thoſe gods and heroes, whom we agree that our parents and relations reſemble? And will not this virtue, which we think we practiſe by diſobedience to our

parents, by reaſon of their vices, produce a greater ill, impiety? And if, on the contrary, we obey them in every thing, how ſhall we ſecure our piety and other virtues, if they, for want of it themſelves, do not inſtruct us in what is good and excellent? For, if whatever our parents commanded us were true and good, the honour we rendered them would perfectly agree with the honour and obedience we owe the gods. But if the will of our parents be not always conformable to the laws of God, what have they to do who find themſelves in this ſort of contrariety between the two laws, but what is daily practiſed in other duties, that in ſome occaſions happen to be incompatible and contradictory to one another, and where one muſt neceſſarily be violated, that the other may be obſerved? For of two good actions that offer themſelves to us, the one whereof is barely good, the other better, we ought indiſpenſibly to prefer the better, when we cannot acquit ourſelves of both. For inſtance, it is a good thing to obey God; and it is good likewiſe to obey our parents. If what God and our parents require of us agree, ſo that in obeying both we tend to the ſame end, it is a great happineſs for us; and this double duty is indiſpenſable. But if the law of God

commands us one thing, and our parents another, we ought, in this contradiction, which cannot be reconciled, to obey God by diſobeying our parents, in the things only wherein they themſelves are diſobedient to the divine laws: for it is not poſſible that a man, who would exactly obſerve the rules of virtue, ſhould ever agree with thoſe that violate them. In all other things we ought to honour our parents to the utmoſt of our power, and without any limitation; by ſerving them ourſelves, and by ſupplying them abundantly, and with all our heart, with the things they have need of; for it is moſt reaſonable they ſhould make uſe of them, to whom they gave a being and education. But that, which no way had any dependence from them, is exempted from their dominion by the law, to which every one, who would truly be a father, ſhould, with all care and induſtry, be conformable. Thus ſhould we be able to preſerve both the divine and human laws. And as we ought not to neglect our parents, under a vain pretext of virtue, ſo neither ought we to fall by a blind and ſenſeleſs obedience into the worſt of all evils, impiety.

But if they threaten to put us to death for our diſobedience, or to diſinherit us, we ought

not to be diſmayed at their menaces *, but remember what part of us that is which is to ſuffer theſe things, and that they threaten only that which they begot: but as to that part of us that cannot ſuffer by their injuſtice, and that comes not from them, we ought to preſerve it free and ſubject to the will of God. The true honour that virtue commands us to render to our parents, is to ſpare for nothing to ſerve them, either body or goods, but to be intirely ſubject to them in what concerns either of the two; for it is becoming and reaſonable never to refuſe them the ſervice of our hands: on the contrary, the more this ſervice is toilſom, mean and ſervile, the more we ought to delight in it, and think ourſelves honoured by it. Much leſs ought we to refuſe to ſupply their wants, and grudge to leſſen their expence, through a motive of avarice; but we ought rather to be laviſh in furniſhing them with all they have occaſion for, and to do it with a chearful mind, thinking ourſelves happy in ſerving them with our perſons and eſtates. He who acts ſo from generous and diſintereſted

* This is an excellent explication of the evangelical precept, "Not to fear thoſe that can kill the body only, but to fear him alone who can kill both ſoul and body."

motives, at once expreſſes his duty to the laws of virtue, and his gratitude to nature. And this is the honour due to our parents. As for that which is due to our relations, it muſt be proportioned according to the various degrees of alliance.

VERSE VI.

Among the reſt of mankind, be ſure to make him your FRIEND, who diſtinguiſhes himſelf moſt by his virtue.

AFTER the law that regulates the honour due to parents, and our neareſt relations, immediately follows, as a conſequence of the former, the law concerning the contracting of friendſhip, which is to chuſe for our friend, among thoſe who are not of our family, him who is the moſt virtuous, and to bind ourſelves to him by the communication of virtues, to the end we may make the good man our friend for a good reaſon, and not ſeek his friendſhip on any other account. This precept ſeems to be entirely conformable to the advice that was given us concerning the good men de-

parted this life: for as in that, we were told, that we ought to honour and revere only thoſe who are full of knowlege and of light; ſo we are told in this, that we ought to contract friendſhip with none but men of probity and virtue. As to theſe, we are allowed the liberty of choice; but as to our parents and relations, we are confined to obey the dictates of nature: for a father or a brother naturally claims our reſpect; but as for the others, I mean our friends, it is virtue only that makes them valuable, in like manner as it gives merit to the dead.

As to the beings ſpoken of before theſe, it is nature itſelf that makes them honourable, and commands us to revere them. In heaven they are the gods and the heroes; here upon earth, they are our parents and our relations, who, under a mortal nature, continually repreſent to us the image of the immortal affinity, that binds us to the gods and to the heroes.

And thus of the method of contracting friendſhips. We ſhall now conſider what means we are to uſe to preſerve a friend ſo long as he contributes to your true good; or to abandon him, if he forſakes the paths of virtue, and ceaſes to obey the precepts and advices that tend to his perfection.

VERSES VII. VIII. IX.

Give ear to his mild exhortations, and take example from his virtuous actions.—And avoid as much as poſſible to hate your friend for a ſlight fault: — For power is a near neighbour to neceſſity.

WE are informed here how we ought to ſtand affected towards our friends. Firſt, we muſt yield to and obey them, when they exhort us to virtue, and when they do any thing for our advantage; for it is for our mutual good that the law of friendſhip binds us together, to the end our friends may aſſiſt us in the increaſe of virtue, and that we may reciprocally aſſiſt them in their improvement therein: for, as fellow-travellers in the way that leads to a better life, we ought, for our common advantage, to impart to them the good things we may diſcover, perhaps, better than they. We ought mildly to ſubmit to the good advices of our friends, and to let them ſhare with us in whatever we have that is good and profitable. As for riches,

honour, and all other frail and periſhable goods, we ought never to have the leaſt difference with our friends concerning them; for that would be to hate, for a ſlight offence, thoſe who are our friends in matters of the higheſt moment. Let us then bear with our friends in all things, as being bound to them with the ſtricteſt of all bands, the ſacred tie of friendſhip. There is but one thing which we are not to bear with in a friend; and that is, when he falls into a corruption of manners: and we are in no wiſe to follow his example when he quits the ways of wiſdom, and takes up another courſe of life; for then we ſhould ſuffer ourſelves to be ſeduced and led aſtray from virtue with him; but we ought to uſe our utmoſt endeavours to reclaim our friend, and to bring him back into the good way. If we cannot prevail with him to return, we muſt reſt ſatisfied, and not regard him as our enemy, becauſe of our former friendſhip, nor as our friend, becauſe of his apoſtacy. We are to renounce and forſake his company, as he is become incapable, on his part, to aſſiſt or forward us in the purſuit and improvement of virtue, for which cauſe alone we ſought his ſociety. But let us take great care that this ſeparation degenerate not into enmity; for though he firſt

unlinked the chain, we are obliged to leave no means untried to reclaim him to his duty, without any rejoicing at the fall of our friend, and without inſulting over him on account of his error; but rather compaſſionate his misfortune with tears and with ſorrow, praying for him, and forgetting nothing that may bring him to a true ſenſe of his crime, and procure his welfare.

Now, the things that may reclaim him, are, —to have no diſpute with him, concerning riches or honour, not to debar him of our company with diſdain, and not to triumph over him on account of his misfortunes. And ſeeing what moſt contributes to the preſerving our friends, or to the forſaking them with reaſon and juſtice, or laſtly to the putting us in a condition to reclaim them to their duty, and to make them repent of their apoſtacy, is to bear with them when they are in the wrong, not to enter with them into too ſtrict a diſcuſſion of our intereſts, to be indulgent to them, and not to take things in the utmoſt rigour; in a word, to have as much patience, and to bear with them as much as poſſibly we can; the author of theſe verſes adds, "as much as you can."

And then, to the end we might not meaſure the power by the will, but by the

ſtrength of nature, as far as the preſent neceſſity can ſupply us therewith, he gives us to underſtand, "That power is a near "neighbour to neceſſity:" for daily experience convinces us, that neceſſity ſupplies us with more ſtrength than we imagine we have. Let us then be fully perſuaded, that we ought to bear with our friends, as much as neceſſity ſhews it is poſſible for us to do; and that on account of the relation of friendſhip we ought to endure what ſeemed to us inſupportable. For we are not to imagine, that courage and fortitude are never to be employed but when we are to reſiſt the efforts of ſtrength and violence: whatever tends to the preſerving, or to the regaining of our friends, requires and deſerves more patience, as being the injunctions of a divine neceſſity.

Now, the neceſſity of reaſon is ſtronger and more prevalent with the wiſe than all exterior force. Whether, therefore, you regard the neceſſity that ariſeth from the ſeveral conjunctures and circumſtances of affairs; or whether you conſider the neceſſity of the will, you will find this laſt, this free and independent neceſſity, this voluntary reſult of reaſon, which is contained within the bounds of knowlege, and is an emanation from the divine laws, to be the meaſure of the power

that is in us, and which this verſe would have us employ for your friends, by commanding us not to break eaſily with them, and not to hate them for a ſlight offence. For this verſe makes but little account of whatever affects not the ſoul: it forbids us to make an enemy of a friend for the ſake of ſelf-intereſt and mercenary ends; and it commands us to endeavour, by an intire indifference for all exterior things, to regain our friend, and ſo to behave ourſelves that the whole world may bear witneſs of us, that as much as in us lay, we have preſerved our friends: that we have reclaimed, and ſet in the right way, thoſe who had ſuffered themſelves to be ſeduced by vice; that we have not given them any cauſe to break with us, nor retaliated like for like, when they firſt diſclaimed our friendſhip: for this the ſacred law of friendſhip requires of us; a law, that may be ſaid to be the moſt excellent of all virtues, and to out-ſhine all the reſt in perfection: for the end of virtue is friendſhip, and its principle is piety. The rules of piety are to us the ſeeds of all true good, and the habit of friendſhip is the moſt perfect fruit of virtue. As therefore we ought always to deal juſtly, not only with thoſe who are juſt to us, but likewiſe with thoſe who endeavour

to injure us; and this too, for fear leſt, by rendering them evil for evil, we ſhould fall into the ſame vice: ſo we ought likewiſe to have friendſhip, that is to ſay, humanity and good-will for all that are of the ſame nature with us.

Now, the due meaſure and regulation of friendſhip conſiſts in loving, in the firſt place, the good and virtuous, as well for the ſake of nature, as for the goodneſs of their diſpoſitions, it being they alone who preſerve in themſelves the perfection of human nature; and in loving, in the next place, the wicked, whoſe inclinations and principles have nothing in them that can induce us to court their friendſhip; in loving them, I ſay, for the ſake of nature only, which is in common to them and us: and therefore it is a true ſaying, "That the wiſe hates no man, but "loves only the virtuous:" for, inaſmuch as he loves man, he hates not even the wicked; and inſomuch as he courts the virtuous to communicate and impart himſelf to him, he ſelects above all the moſt perfect, for the object of his affections: and thus in the rules and meaſures of his friendſhip he imitates God, who hates no man, but loves good men preferably to others, and who, extending his love to all mankind, takes care to diſtribute

to each man in particular, the ſhare he deſerves of it, by calling and uniting good men to himſelf, and by the laws of his juſtice bringing back to their duty the deſerters from virtue: for this is a diſpenſation ſuitable and uſeful to the one and the other.

And thus we, in like manner, ought to have a friendſhip for all men, yet not for all men alike, but diſtributing to each the ſhare of it he deſerves: for we ſhould obſerve and practiſe moderation and juſtice with all men, and not only with the juſt and the moderate; nor may we be good with the good, and wicked with the wicked; for then each accident would have power to change us: and we ſhould not have any good, we could call our own, to extend and diſpenſe it to all mankind. But if we have acquired a habit of virtue, it depends not on him who comes firſt in our way, to make us loſe it: and being once ſafely eſtabliſhed on foundations not to be removed or ſhaken; we will not change that happy ſtate, that firm and ſolid diſpoſition, and alter our opinions with every man we meet.

What we practiſe in all other virtues, ought likewiſe to be obſerved in friendſhip, which, as I have ſaid already, is the greateſt of all virtues: for friendſhip is only the hu-

manity, which we extend in general to all mankind, and chiefly to good men: therefore the name of HUMANITY, that is to ſay, of the love of men, particularly agrees with it.—This is ſufficient on this point, let us now proceed to others.

VERSES IX. X.

Know that all theſe things are as I have told you: but accuſtom yourſelf to ſurmount and vanquiſh theſe paſſions.—Firſt, gluttony, ſloth, luxury, and anger.

THESE are the paſſions we ought to reſtrain and keep under, that we may not diſcompoſe and obſtruct our reaſon. To prevent this, let us get the maſtery of all our wild and brutiſh deſires by ſevere diſcipline, ſince they miniſter occaſion of vice to one another. For example, exceſs in eating provokes much ſleep, and both together occaſion a vigorous health, which excites to luſt, and provoking the concupiſcible part of the ſoul, eggs it on to intemperance. At length the iraſcible part, coming to join the concu-

piſcible, dreads no danger, is ſtartled at no oppoſition, but dares undaunted the worſt can happen, to glut its depraved appetite, ſometimes for luxurious eating, ſometimes for carnal pleaſures, and ſometimes for other delights. " Accuſtom yourſelf therefore to " curb theſe paſſions," beginning with gluttony, that the irrational parts of the ſoul may accuſtom themſelves to be obedient to reaſon; and that you may be able conſtantly to obſerve reverence towards yourſelf, honour towards your parents, and all the other duties you were juſt now exhorted to. For the obſervance of thoſe firſt precepts depends on the keeping of theſe, and you will infallibly tranſgreſs the firſt, if the paſſions be not kept in ſubjection, and obedience to reaſon: for, on the one hand, either anger will provoke us againſt our parents, or concupiſcence will excite us to ſet at naught their good advices; and, on the other hand, either anger will precipitate us into blaſphemy, or the deſire of riches will plunge us into perjury. In a word, all ill things are cauſed by theſe paſſions, when reaſon is too weak to keep them within their bounds.

Thus you ſee which are the ſources of all impieties, of all the broils that ſet families at variance, of the treacheries of friends, and

of all the crimes that are committed in breach of the laws: ſo that ſome of the wicked are forced to cry out with Medea in the tragedy,

" I know theſe crimes will blacken my loſt ſoul;
" But rage my weaker reaſon does controul."

Others,

" I know the crimes I'm going to commit;
" But vanquiſh'd reaſon does to luſt ſubmit."

Or thus,

" On me thy good advice is thrown away;
" My captive ſoul [will obey."
" Is bound with ſhameful chains, nor can, nor

For the rational nature being rightly diſpoſed to the ſenſe of what is excellent, does eaſily remember its own dignity, and is quickly ſtirred up to the diſcipline of right reaſon, unleſs it be borne down to vice, by the force of the paſſions, as with ſo many leaden weights and plummets.

We ought therefore to know our duty, and accuſtom, as much as we can, our brutal and ſenſual faculties to be obedient to the reaſon that is in us: for the paſſions being thus kept in ſubjection, reaſon will be in a condition to obſerve inviolably the firſt precepts, concerning which we are told in this place; " Know that theſe things are ſo." And concerning the following precepts; " But accuſtom yourſelf to vanquiſh," &c.

to make us underſtand, that the intelligent part is governed by diſcipline and knowlege; and that the ſenſual or brutal part is guided by cuſtom and bodily formation; for thus men tame and train up beaſts, by means of habitude only. The appetite therefore being habituated to content itſelf with a ſufficient and reaſonable quantity, will not only retrench the other bodily paſſions, but will make that of anger more calm and ſedate, that we may quietly reaſon about our duty, not violently agitated by our inward paſſions. And from thence we learn to know ourſelves, to know what we truly are, and to reſpect ourſelves when we have attained to that knowlege: from which, and from that reverence, which is a never-failing conſequence of it, we learn to avoid ſhameful actions, becauſe they are indecent, and unworthy of an intelligent being. Concerning which are the following verſes.

VERSES XI. XII.

Never commit any ſhameful actions, neither with others, — Nor in private with yourſelf: but reverence yourſelf above all things.

IT frequently happens, either that we commit ſhameful actions in private by ourſelves, becauſe we believe them indifferent, which we ſhould never have committed in preſence of others, for the ſhame of having a witneſs; or, on the contrary, that with others, we commit thoſe crimes that we ſhould never have committed alone, or in private, drawn in by company, and the number of the accomplices leſſening the ſhame of the action. This is the reaſon why the philoſopher, in this place, ſtops up theſe two ways, that may lead us to ſhame and wickedneſs; for, if all that is ſhameful ought to be avoided, no circumſtance whatever can make it eligible; and therefore he joined theſe two together, "Neither with others, nor in private by "yourſelf;" to the end that neither ſolitude might induce you to act any indecency; nor company, or the number of accomplices,

countenance and abet you in the practice of it. After which he adds the cauſe that alone prevents from committing wickedneſs, "Above all, reverence yourſelf:" for, if you have once an habitual reverence of yourſelf, you will always have at hand a faithful guardian whom you will reſpect, who will never depart far from you, but always keep you in his ſight. For it has often happened, that many, after their friends and acquaintances had left them, have taken the liberty to act ſuch things as they would have been aſhamed to have done in their preſence: was there then no witneſs of it? I ſpeak not here of God, for God is far from the thoughts of the wicked: but had they not their own ſouls for their witneſſes? Had they not the teſtimony of their own conſciences? Doubtleſs they had; but being ſubjected to their paſſions, and enſlaved by them, they knew not that ſuch witneſſes were preſent. But all who are in this condition contemn their own reaſon, and treat it worſe than the vileſt ſlave.

Eſtabliſh yourſelf then for your own guard and inſpector; and keeping the eyes of your underſtanding always fixed on this faithful guardian, begin to have an abhorrence of vice. The reverence you ſhall have for yourſelf, will of neceſſity create in you an abhorrence

of all vice, and incline you to ſhun and avoid whatever is ſhameful, and unworthy to be committed by a reaſonable being: for he, who thinks ill actions unworthy of him, inſenſibly familiarizes himſelf with virtue. Our author therefore goes on.

VERSES XIII. XIV. XV. XVI.

In the next place, obſerve juſtice in all your actions and words:—Neither uſe yourſelf, in any matter, to act without reaſon.—But always make this reflection, that it is ordained by deſtiny for all men to die:—And that the goods of fortune are uncertain; and that as they may be acquired, they may likewiſe be loſt.

WHOSOEVER reſpects and reveres himſelf, becomes his own guard, to prevent himſelf from falling into any manner of vice. Now, there are ſeveral ſorts of vices: the vice of the rational part is folly; of the

iraſcible, cowardice; the vices of the concupiſcible are intemperance and avarice; and the vice that extends itſelf through all the faculties, is injuſtice.

To avoid therefore all theſe vices, we have need of four virtues; of prudence, for the rational faculty; of courage, for the iraſcible; of temperance, for the concupiſcible: and for all theſe faculties together, we have need of juſtice, which is the moſt perfect of all the virtues, and being the chief of all, includes the reſt as its proper parts. And therefore theſe verſes name juſtice firſt, next prudence; and after prudence they mention the moſt excellent effects that ſpring from that virtue, and which contribute to the perfection, and to the intireneſs or totality of juſtice. For every man who reaſons right, and who makes uſe of his prudence, is aſſiſted by courage in all good and praiſe-worthy actions; by temperance, in the things that pleaſe the ſenſes; and in the one and the other by juſtice.

Thus prudence is the principle of all virtues, and juſtice their end; and in the middle are courage and temperance. For the faculty that weighs and conſiders all things by right reaſoning, and that ſeeks out that which is right in every action, to the end that all things may be done with reaſon and

in due order, is the habit of prudence; that is to ſay, the moſt excellent diſpoſition of our rational being, by which all the other faculties are kept in good order: ſo that anger commences courage; luſt, temperance; and juſtice, by correcting and amending all our vices, and by animating all our virtues, adorns our mortal man with the exceſſive abundance of the virtue of the immortal man: for, it is originally from the divine Spirit that the virtues radiate and diffuſe themſelves in the reaſonable ſoul; it is they that conſtitute its form, its perfection, and all its felicity. And from the ſoul, theſe virtues ſhine with a reflected ray on this mortal body, by a ſecret and hidden communication, to the end that all that is joined to the rational eſſence may be filled with beauty, with decency, and with order.

Now, prudence, the firſt, and, as it were, the guide of all divine goods, being eſtabliſhed and firmly rooted in the reaſonable ſoul, adviſes us well, and makes us take the right courſe in all occaſions, enables us to bear death with conſtancy, and the loſs of the goods of fortune with patience and mildneſs: for prudence alone can wiſely, and with intrepidity, ſupport the viciſſitudes of this mortal nature, and of fortune that depends up-

on it. For ſhe conſiders the nature of things, and knows that what is compounded of water and earth, muſt of neceſſity be reſolved into them again. Prudence never quarrels with deſtiny; nor, becauſe this mortal body dies, concludes from thence, that there is no ſuch thing as providence: for ſhe knows that it is ordained by fate for all men to die; that there is a time prefixed for the duration of this mortal body; and that when our laſt moment is arrived, we ought not to repine, but ſubmit voluntarily to it as to the law of God; for that law is properly what is meant by the word DESTINY: it ſignifies, that God himſelf has, by his decrees, deſtined and preſcribed neceſſary limits to this mortal life, beyond which no man can paſs; and it is the nature of prudence to follow the decrees of God, not by deſiring not to die, but by endeavouring to die well.

Moreover, prudence is not ignorant of the nature of the goods of fortune; ſhe knows that they come to-day, and are gone to-morrow, according to certain cauſes that are predeſtined and preſcribed, to reſiſt which is vain and diſhonourable; for we are not the maſters to keep what is not in our power. Now, moſt certainly, neither our bodies, nor the goods of fortune, in a word, nothing

that is divided from our rational being, is in our power: and as it depends not on us to get them when we pleaſe, ſo it depends not on us neither to keep them as long as we pleaſe. But to receive them when they come, and to part with them when they go, and always to receive and part with them with much conſtancy and virtue, this is in our power, and the proper work of the rational nature, if we accuſtom it to act according to reaſon in all contingencies, and to follow the divine limits which determine all our concerns. The main ſtreſs and extent therefore of what depends on us, and is in our power, appears chiefly in this; that we can judge aright of the things that depend not on us, and that we need not ſuffer ourſelves to be deprived of the power of our free-will by an inordinate affection to frail and periſhable things.

What is it that wiſe and ſound judgment dictates to us? It bids us make a good uſe of our body and of our riches while we have them, and make them ſerve as inſtruments and means to acquire virtue; and when we are on the point of loſing them, it bids us reſt ſatisfied of the neceſſity of it, and add to all our other virtues, that of tranquillity and indifference. For, the only way to preſerve piety towards God, and the due pro-

portion of juſtice, is to habituate our reaſon to make a good uſe of all the various accidents that arrive to us, and to oppoſe the precepts of prudence to all the contingencies that ſeem fortuitous, and to happen without order: for we can never preſerve virtue, unleſs our judgment be ſound, and our opinions wholſome.

Never will the man, who has accuſtomed himſelf to live without rule and without reaſon, follow the direction of the ſuperior beings, but will regard them as tyrants, that force and conſtrain them; never will he have the leaſt regard for thoſe among whom he lives, and never will he make a good uſe either of his body or eſtate. Conſider thoſe who fear to die, and who are wedded to their riches: ſee into what injuſtices, into what blaſphemies they neceſſarily plunge themſelves, by ſetting up the ſtandard of impiety againſt God, by denying his providence when they ſee themſelves fallen into the things they fooliſhly thought to avoid, and by doing all ſorts of injuries to their neighbour, without making any ſcruple of raviſhing from him his eſtate, that they may convert to their own uſe all they can unjuſtly ſcrape together.

Thus it is manifeſt, how theſe reprobates are miſled by falſe opinions, from whence

proceed the greateſt of all evils, injuſtice to their equals, and impiety to thoſe above them; evils, from which he is exempted, who, obeying this precept, is undaunted at the approach of death, whoſe judgment is refined and purged by reaſon; and who does not believe the loſs of temporal goods to be inſupportable. From thence ſpring all the inducements and motives that incline him to virtue; for by this he will learn, that he ought to abſtain from what is another's, to do no wrong to any man, and never to ſeek his own profit to the detriment and loſs of his neighbour. Now, this can never be obſerved by the man who believes his ſoul to be mortal, and who, having got a habit of living without rule and without reaſon, diſtinguiſhes not between what is mortal in us and has need of riches, and what is ſuſceptible of virtue, and aſſiſted and ſtrengthened by virtue: for this due diſcernment only can incline us to the practice of virtue, and ſtir us up to the purſuit of what is good and honourable; in which purſuit we are furthered and helped forwards by a divine motive, which ſprings from theſe two precepts, "Know "thyſelf, and reverence thyſelf." For our own worth and dignity ought to be the ſtandard by which we ſhould meaſure all our du-

ties both in our words and in our actions; and the obſervance of our duties is only the exact and inviolable obſervance of juſtice.

Thus you ſee why juſtice is here placed at the head of all the other virtues, that it may be the meaſure and rule of our duties. "Ob- "ſerve juſtice," ſays he, "both in your "words, and in your actions." Let no blaſphemy then proceed from your mouth, neither for the loſs of temporal goods, nor in the ſharpeſt pangs of a diſeaſe, that you may not offend juſtice in your words; and never defraud your neighbour of his goods, nor contrive miſchief or loſs to any man, that you may not offend juſtice in your actions: for ſo long as juſtice keeps, as it were, garriſon in our ſoul, to protect and defend it, we ſhall perform all our duties towards God, men, and ourſelves. Now, prudence is the beſt rule, and the beſt meaſure of juſtice; therefore, after the precept, "Obſerve juſtice," he adds, "Neither uſe yourſelf, in any matter, to act "without reaſon," ſeeing juſtice cannot ſubſiſt without prudence. And indeed, there is nothing truly juſt, but what perfect prudence has ordered: it is prudence that teaches us to do nothing without reaſon, and to examine and weigh with care what this mortal body is, what it has need of, and what is neceſſary for

its accommodation: it is prudence that takes every thing to be vile and contemptible in compariſon of juſtice, and that makes all its good to conſiſt in the beſt diſpoſition of the ſoul, which gives to all other things all the ornament and value they are capable to receive.

Thus you ſee the deſign of theſe verſes is to produce in the ſoul of thoſe that read them, theſe four practical virtues, with an exact and watchful obſervance of them both in word and deed: for one of theſe virtues inſpires prudence, another courage, a third temperance; and that which precedes the three, exhorts to the keeping of juſtice, which diffuſes itſelf through all the other virtues: and this verſe, "That the goods of fortune "are uncertain, and that as they may be ac- "quired, they may be loſt likewiſe," is here added, to make us underſtand, that the habit of temperance is generally accompanied with liberality; a virtue that regulates the receipt and expence of the goods of fortune; for to receive and expend them when reaſon requires it, alone deſtroys niggardlineſs and prodigality. All theſe virtues proceed originally from this principle of "reverencing "one's ſelf;" and this precept is included in this, "Know thyſelf," which ought to pre-

cede all our good actions, and all other knowlege.

In effect, how can we otherwiſe come to know that we ought to moderate our paſſions, and to underſtand the nature of things? For there is much doubt concerning theſe things; firſt, whether they be within the verge of human attainment? and, ſecondly, whether they will profit thoſe who have them? For good men ſeem to be much more unhappy in this life than the wicked, becauſe they take not unjuſtly from any man what they ought not to take, and becauſe they pay every man what is his due: and as to what regards the body, the good man is more expoſed to ill uſage, becauſe he ſeeks not after rule and dominion, and makes not ſervilely his court to thoſe that govern: ſo that if there was not in us an eſſence, whoſe ſole delight and advantage is derived from virtue, it is in vain for us to deſpiſe riches and honours.

Thus you ſee why they, who being of opinion that the ſoul is mortal, teach that we ought not to abandon virtue, are rather idle talkers than true philoſophers; for, if there ſubſiſted not ſomething of us after our death, and if that ſomething too were not of a nature capable to be adorned with virtue and with truth, ſuch as we believe the reaſonable

ſoul to be, our deſires would never be fixed on good and honeſt actions, becauſe the bare ſuſpicion of the ſoul's being mortal ſtifles and deadens in us all our zeal for virtue, and excites us to the enjoyment of corporeal pleaſures, whatever they be, and whenceſoever they ſpring. And indeed, how can theſe men pretend, that a prudent man, who makes uſe of his reaſon, ought not in every thing to indulge his body, for which alone, according to them, the ſoul itſelf ſubſiſts, ſince it exiſts not by itſelf, but is an accident of this or that conformation of body? How can it be, that we ſhould abandon the body for the ſake of virtue, when we verily believe that we ſhall loſe the ſoul with the body, inſomuch that this virtue, for which we ſhall have ſuffered death, is no where to be found, and has no exiſtence? But this matter has been treated at large by ſome divine perſons, who have invincibly proved, that the ſoul is immortal, and that virtue alone is all its ornament.

Having therefore confirmed the truth of this opinion by ſuch authentic teſtimonies, let us proceed to what follows, and add to what we have already aſſerted, that as the ignorance of what we are, neceſſarily throws us into all manner of vices, ſo the knowlege

of ourſelves, and the contempt of all that is unworthy of a reaſonable nature, produce in us, and throughout us, the ſure and reaſonable obſervance of our duties; and therein conſiſts the exact meaſure of all virtues in particular: for ſo long as we regard and conſider our nature as our only rule, we ſhall find what is our duty in every thing, and accompliſh it according to right reaſon, and conformably to our eſſence. Whatever tends to the perfection of the ſoul, and that leads it to the felicity ſuitable to its nature, is truly virtue, and the law of philoſophy; and all things that tend only to a certain human decency, are only ſhadows of virtue that haunt after popular applauſe, and artifices of a diſſembling ſlave, who ſets all his wits to work that he may appear virtuous, rather than be ſo indeed. But we have ſaid enough on this article.

From the uſe we make of our right reaſon, it neceſſarily follows, that we behave not ourſelves raſhly and fooliſhly in any of the accidents of this life, that ſeem to us to happen without order; but that we bear them generouſly, in diſcovering exactly the cauſes of them, and ſupport them with conſtancy, never complaining of the beings who have the care of us, and who diſtributing to each

man according to his merit what is due to him, have not beſtowed the ſame rank and the ſame dignity on thoſe who gave not proofs of the ſame virtue during their firſt life: for, ſeeing there is a providence, and that the ſoul of man is incorruptible by nature, and inclining either to virtue or to vice voluntarily and of its own free choice, how can they, who are the very guardians and keepers of the law, that requires every man to be treated according to his deſerts, treat alike thoſe that are no wiſe alike? And how can they do otherwiſe than diſtribute to each man the fortune, which it is ſaid each man at his coming into the world chuſes for himſelf, according to the lot that has fallen to his ſhare?

If therefore it be not a fable, that there is a providence, that diſtributes to each man what is his due, and that our ſoul is immortal, it is evident, that inſtead of accuſing him, that governs us, of our misfortunes, we ought only to blame ourſelves; and that is the way to acquire a power and ſtrength ſufficient to heal and amend all our misfortunes, as the following verſes will teach us. For when we once come to find the cauſes of this great inequality to be in ourſelves, we ſhall, in the firſt place, by the ſoundneſs of our judg-

ments, alleviate the bitterneſs of all the accidents that happen to us in this life; and, in the next place, by holy methods, and by good reflections, ſtemming the tide of afflictions, we ſhall raiſe up our ſouls to what is moſt excellent, and intirely deliver ourſelves from the moſt grievous ills we ſuffer. For, to ſuffer, without knowing the cauſe of our ſufferings, and without conjecturing at leaſt what may probably have brought us into that condition, is the part of a man who is accuſtomed to behave himſelf in all things without reaſon, and without reflection, which this precept expreſly forbids; for it is impoſſible that he, who enquires not into the true cauſe of his ills, ſhould not accuſe the ſupreme beings of being the authors of them, by aſſerting, either that there are none, or that they take not the care of us that they ought: and theſe impious opinions not only increaſe the ills that come to us from our prior life, but likewiſe excite the ſoul to commit all manner of crimes, and deprive it of its freedom of will, by keeping it in a forgetfulneſs of the cauſes of what it ſuffers here below. But that you may know how we ought to reaſon of theſe things, let us attend to the following verſes.

VERSES XVII. XVIII. XIX. XX.

Concerning all the calamities that men ſuffer by divine fortune,—Support with patience your lot, be it what it will, and never repine at it,—But endeavour what you can to remedy it.—And conſider that fate does not ſend the greateſt portion of theſe misfortunes to good men.

BEFORE we enter any farther on the explication of theſe verſes, it is requiſite to take notice, that what our author here calls CALAMITIES, are all the pains and afflictions that render this life moſt difficult, laborious and uneaſy, as diſeaſes, poverty, the loſs of the friends and acquaintances that are moſt dear to us, to be contemned in our country, and the like: for all ſuch things are troubleſome and hard to bear. They are not however real ills, and they hurt not the ſoul, unleſs it ſuffer itſelf to be precipitated by

them into vice, which would no leſs happen from the enjoyment of good things, if we refuſe to make a good uſe of them, as of health, of riches, of dignities; for we may be depraved by theſe, as we may be ſanctified by their contraries. Now, the real ills are the offences we commit voluntarily and of our own free choice, and which are incompatible with virtue, as injuſtice, intemperance, and all the other things that can in no ways be united, matched, or reconciled with what is good, excellent, and decent; for it is not poſſible on account of any of theſe vices to cry out, "This is well," or the like. For example, no man will ever ſay, "It is well "or good to be ſo unjuſt; it is well done to "be ſo intemperate:" as we daily ſay of exterior evils; "It is well done to bear ſickneſs "in ſuch a manner; it is well done to undergo "poverty like ſuch a one;" when any man ſupports theſe accidents with conſtancy, and according to the dictates of right reaſon. But theſe exclamations can never be congruouſly applied to the vices of the ſoul, becauſe they are deviations from right reaſon, and contradictions to it; which, though it be naturally imprinted in the ſouls of all men, is nevertheleſs imperceptible to a man blinded by his paſſion.

Now, a certain proof that right reaſon is implanted in man, is, that even an unjuſt man, when his intereſt is not concerned, judges with juſtice, and an intemperate man reads lectures of temperance to others: in a word, that the wicked have good motions and inclinations in all the affairs that concern them not, and wherein their paſſions do not over-rule them. And this is the reaſon that all vicious men may amend their lives, and become virtuous, if they condemn and forſake their former vices. Neither to this end is it neceſſary that wrong reaſon ſhould be in us, that this might be the principle of vice, as the other is of virtue. For right reaſon alone, like the laws of the land, is a ſufficient ſtandard whereby to define what is done according to it, and what againſt it, and to approve of the one, and reſtrain the other. Neither is there any need of any principle of evil, whether internal or external. But there is great need of a principle of good, and of that only; and that again is either ſeparate from the rational nature, which is God, or lodged and enthroned within us, which is right reaſon.

Let us now obſerve the difference our philoſopher makes between evils. Speaking of voluntary evils, he does not ſay that they are diſtributed by the divine fortune; but he ſays

it of the ills that are exterior and conditional, which in this life depend not on us, and that are the effects of the offences formerly committed: theſe ills are indeed painful and calamitous, as we have ſaid already; but they may receive a luſtre and ornament from the hands of virtue. For a regular and temperate life gives luſtre to poverty; prudence nobilitates a mean extraction; the loſs of children is alleviated by a due ſubmiſſion, that makes the father ſay, "My ſon is dead; and "thus I have returned back what was lent "me:" Or, "I knew he was conceived in "mortality." In like manner, all the other ills, when illuſtrated by the preſence of virtue, become reſplendent, and even worthy of envy.

Let us now enquire what is meant in theſe verſes by "the divine fortune," by which men fall into outward evils: for if God gives before-hand, and of himſelf, to one riches, to another poverty; this ſhould be called DIVINE WILL, not FORTUNE: and if nothing governs or preſides over theſe diſpenſations, but if it be true, that theſe ills are fortuitous, and arrive by chance, and thus one man comes to be happy, as we call it, and another unhappy, this ought to be called FORTUNE only, and not DIVINE FORTUNE. But

if God, who takes care of us, diſtributes to each man according to his merits, and if he be not the cauſe of our being wicked, but only the maſter to render to each according to his works, by following the ſacred laws of juſtice, it is with reaſon that our author gives the name of DIVINE FORTUNE to the manifeſtation of his judgments; thereby intimating to us, that God has no abſolute antecedent purpoſe to puniſh one and honour another, but only as he behaves himſelf, ſo or ſo, and that the cauſe of this is not to be ſought for out of ourſelves: ſo that this mixture and alloy of our will and of his judgments, is what produces that which he calls FORTUNE; and the whole together, DIVINE FORTUNE, is only the manifeſtation of the judgments of God againſt wicked offenders.

Thus the ingenious and artificial connexion of theſe two words joins and links together the care of God who preſides, and the liberty and free motion of the ſoul that elects, and lets us ſee that theſe ills arrive, neither abſolutely, by the decrees of deſtiny and providence, nor yet fortuitouſly and by chance; and that it is not our will alone that diſpoſes of and determines all the actions of our life; but that all the offences we commit in what

depends on us, are imputed to our will; and the punishments that follow them, acccording to the laws of justice, are ascribed to destiny; and that the good things that God bestows before-hand, and without our previous merit, are attributed to providence: for nothing of all that exists is referred to chance. This word CHANCE can never agree nor suit with the first causes in any of the things that happen, unless they happen fortuitously and by the meeting and union of providence or fate, and of the will that preceded the action.

For example, a judge would punish a murderer, but would not punish such a man by name; nevertheless he punishes the man whom he would not, because he has voluntarily put himself in the rank of murderers. Now, the sentence pronounced by the judge against the murderer is antecedent and previous in the will of the judge, and the sentence pronounced against this man is accidental, because he voluntarily entered himself in the list of murderers. Again, this wicked man had the will to commit this murder, but not to be punished for it. This murderous inclination is antecedent in him as depending on his will, and it is by accident that he undergoes the tortures and punishments that this murder deserves. And the reason of all these

things is the law that gave the judge the will to puniſh the wicked, and that makes this ſentence of death be inflicted on him who did the murder. Think the ſame thing of the divine eſſence. The will of a man is to commit a ſin, and the will of the judges, the maintainers of the law, is by all means to puniſh and reſtrain him. The meeting or concourſe of theſe two wills produces "the "divine fortune;" by which, whoever is guilty of ſuch or ſuch crimes, is worthy of ſuch or ſuch puniſhments. The choice of the crime ought to be imputed only to the will of him who is judged, and the puniſhment that follows the quality of the crime, is only the effect of the knowlege of the judges, who are watchful for the maintenance of the law and of juſtice. And that which conciliates and manages the concourſe of both theſe, is the law that wills all things to be as good as poſſible, and that there ſhould be no ſuch thing as evil.

Now, this law, pre-exiſting in the infinite goodneſs of God, ſuffers not the wicked to go unpuniſhed, leſt ill ſhould be ſo inveterate, as to throw men into an intire inſenſibility for good, and a total forgetfulneſs of it: the memory whereof is refreſhed and kept alive in us by the juſtice of thoſe who

are watchful for the ſupport of the laws. The law therefore unites and joins together, as well thoſe that are to judge, as thoſe that are to be judged, that it may draw from each of them the good that is proper to both: for, if it be more advantageous and profitable to be puniſhed, than not; and if the whole ſcope of juſtice be only to reſtrain the inundation of vices, it is evident, that to aſſiſt and be aſſiſted is the deſign of the law in joining theſe two ſorts of men together, by giving the pre-eminence to him that judges, as to the ſupporter of the law, and by delivering over to him as a tranſgreſſor of the law, him that commits offences, and who ought to be judged that he may be treated according to his demerits, to the end, that, by penalties and puniſhments, he might be brought to reſpect the law, and to recal to his remembrance what it injoins. For him whom men curſe and deny in the ill they do, they confeſs and invoke in the ill they ſuffer.

For example, he who commits an injuſtice wiſhes there were no God, that he may not ſee his puniſhment, like the rock of Tantalus, always impending over him: and he who ſuffers this injuſtice wiſhes there were a God, that he may have the neceſſary relief for the injuries done him. And this is the

reaſon why the unjuſt, who make others ſuffer, ought likewiſe to be made to ſuffer in their turn: to the end that what they did not ſee when they committed the injuſtice, by reaſon of their being infatuated with the love of riches, they may, if they make a right uſe of their puniſhment, both ſee and learn by their own ſufferings, when they come to be inſtructed by affliction. But if, through the obſtinacy of their will, they perſiſt in their evil courſes, and are more and more hardened in their wickedneſs, it may well be that the puniſhment will be uſeleſs to them, but they will become an example of great inſtruction to the wiſe, and to ſuch as are capable of perceiving and knowing the cauſes of all theſe evils. The chief cauſes of this judgment are the goodneſs of God, and the law he has imprinted in our hearts; that is to ſay, ſound reaſon, which is as a God inhabiting in us, and who is daily injured and offended by our crimes: and the end of theſe judgments are, all the calamities that render our life moſt painful and uneaſy, whether by corporeal pains or exterior afflictions.

Theſe are the puniſhments which theſe verſes command us to ſupport in patience, by reflecting on the cauſes of them, by endeavouring to prevent them, and to turn to

our own advantage what is moſt hurtful in them. Above all, they exhort us to render ourſelves worthy to partake of divine good, by an exact obſervance of the ſublimeſt virtues. But if any ſhould be found incapable even of forming this deſire; let them at leaſt, by a practice of the lower virtues, aſpire to civil good: for this is the reaſon why we are here commanded to ſupport calamities in patience, and to endeavour to remedy them.

Now, what other remedy can there be beſides what has been ſaid, by which the grief of ſufferings may appear conſonant to reaſon, and a method of cure be found out? The ſum of all is this, that God, as legiſlator and judge, commands the good, and forbids the evil; and therefore he is in no wiſe the cauſe of ill: but they, who, out of a motion wholly free and wholly voluntary, have embraced vice, and forgot the ſound reaſon which is implanted in them, he puniſhes them as wicked, according to the law, that condemns and forbids the evil; and he puniſhes them as men, by reaſon of the fortuitous meeting and claſhing of the law with their depraved will; and this meeting we call FORTUNE, as we have already explained: for the law puniſhes not man as man,

but as wicked; and that he has become ſuch, his own will is the principal cauſe. When therefore he is become an offender, which proceeds ſolely from himſelf, and not from God, he receives the chaſtiſement due to his crimes, which comes from the divine law, and not from himſelf: for the ſole deſign of the law, which is worthy of God, and profitable for us, is to deſtroy vice, to purge it by all the puniſhments of juſtice, and by that means to oblige the ſoul, that has plunged itſelf in evil, to return to the dictates of ſound reaſon.

This is then the nature of the law, which ſpeaks always in the ſame manner: but ſeeing the works of each man are different, they receive not always the ſame retribution; for that would be neither equitable in itſelf, nor profitable for us. The difference of judgments proceeds from the different condition of the criminal; for how ſhall we treat after the ſame manner a man who is not the ſame?

Let us therefore ſupport in patience "the "divine fortune," and not repine to be purified as much as the divine judgment thinks fit, by pains and afflictions, which ſeem to embitter the ſweets and to diſturb the tranquillity of this life. This reflection will tend to cure us of our former offences, and procure our return to the ſound reaſon that is

in us: for will not he who is convinced, that misery is the fruit of vice, avoid the cause that plunges him therein? And if we ought to repine and be angry in our afflictions, it is with ourselves, rather than with God, who endeavours only to retrench our vices with all the instruments of justice, that can make us comprehend and reflect on — how inestimable a good it is not to deviate from the divine laws, and not to corrupt and destroy ourselves voluntarily and of our own free choice. For afflictions are not distributed to men by chance, if there be a God over us, and fixed laws to govern us, and to dispense to every man the lot that is his due.

Thus you see, that it is very reasonable, as is said in this place, "that destiny should "not send the greatest portion of these mis-"fortunes to good men:" for first of all, good men support these evils in patience, through an intire acquiescence in the judgment of God, and in prospect of the virtue which they acquire by so doing, and that alleviates all the calamities of this life. Besides, they have strong hopes, that ills of this nature will never discompose the quiet of their days, seeing it is certain, that divine goods are reserved for the perfect, who have attained to the sublimest pitch of virtue, and

that human goods are the portion of ſuch as have acquired a midling habitude, that is to ſay, a mediocrity of virtue.

Moreover, they will eaſe theſe afflictions, as much as poſſibly they can, by ſupporting them in patience, and by learning from that patience the ſure method to heal them. For how can it be, that a man ſhould ſend up to heaven devout ſupplications, and offer holy ſacrifices in a manner worthy of God, whilſt he is perſuaded, that neither providence nor juſtice watch over the affairs of men, and ſo long as he dares deny the ſoul to be immortal, and that ſhe receives for her lot theſe exterior evils, according as ſhe has deſerved them by the motions of her will? How will the man, who refers not to theſe cauſes the accidents of this preſent life, be enabled to ſupport them in patience, and where will he learn the art to amend and heal them? It is hard to reſolve this queſtion; for never will he reſign himſelf to theſe evils, as to indifferent things, and often even better than their contraries, ſince being calamitous and painful, they will always appear in themſelves worthy of his utmoſt averſion: for our nature embraces not theſe ſorts of things as eligible and deſirable in themſelves, except that by ſupporting them with reſignation ſhe ex-

pects to be rewarded with good. What then happens to a man in that condition? He repines at his lot, he revolts againſt it, he augments his ills by the ignorance of his own nature; and yet his puniſhment is not leſſened thereby.

The exceſs of vice proceeds from this opinion, that the world is not governed by providence, or, if it be, that the adminiſtration is bad; which is as much as to ſay, either that there is no God; or if there be a God, that he takes not care of this world, or if he does take care of it, that he is unjuſt and wicked. An opinion that includes all manner of impieties, and that precipitates into all ſorts of crimes them that are poſſeſſed with it: for as piety is the mother of all virtues, ſo impiety is the parent of all vices.

He only therefore will find the remedy to all his ills, who has learnt to ſupport them with patience and mildneſs: and this can come only from philoſophy, that teaches exactly what is the nature of things, and what are the operations conformable to that nature. Operations, whoſe connection, and the relation they have to one another, compoſe the government of this univerſe; by which adminiſtration "the divine fortune" is diſtributed to each man: and the lot that falls to

each, according to his merit, is what is here called FATE or DESTINY, which depends on the providence of God, on the diſpoſition and order of this univerſe, and on the will of man: for if there were no providence, there would be no order in the world; and this order may be called deſtiny: and if there were neither providence nor order, there would be neither judgment nor juſtice; nor even ſo much as rewards and honours for good men. But there being a fixt and certain providence and order, all men who are born into the world muſt neceſſarily have a like ſhare of all the ſame good, unleſs they contribute, on their part, to what cauſes the inequality. Now, it is manifeſtly evident, that all good things are equally diſtributed, and by conſequence it is viſible, that the inequality and unlikeneſs of their wills, which is ſubmitted to the judgment of providence, ſuffers them not to have all the ſame ſhare, or the ſame lot, ſince this lot muſt of neceſſity be proportioned to their merit.

And let us not be troubled to ſee that the ſame inequality reigns as well in brute beaſts, in plants, and in all inanimate things, as in man; for we ought not, becauſe we ſee that chance rules over all theſe things that are ſo

inferior to man, to conclude from thence, that providence watches not over us: nor ought we neither, becauſe whatever relates to us is abſolutely determined and brought to paſs, to conclude from thence, that the juſtice and judgment which God extends over all theſe inferior beings, is likewiſe in them a token and effect of their virtue or their vice. For, firſt, the things that are merely inanimate ſerve as common matter to plants and to animals; and, moreover, the plants ſerve for nouriſhment to men and to beaſts, ſome of which laſt are deſtined to nouriſh their fellow-beaſts and men. It is therefore evident, that theſe things are not thus ordered and done, with regard to the merits of any of thoſe animals, but proceed from their endeavour, and from a deſire they have to ſatisfy their hunger, to heal their diſeaſes, or, in a word, to relieve their ſeveral wants and neceſſities in the beſt manner they can; inſomuch that the infelicity of beaſts is occaſioned by our neceſſities, which they are deſtined to relieve: and, on the contrary, the cauſe of what we call their happineſs, is the affection with which we ſometimes ſuffer ourſelves to be poſſeſſed for them.

But if, in carrying theſe arguments further, it ſhould be objected to us, that there are a-

bove us ſome beings, that make uſe of us to aſſuage their hunger, as we make uſe of beaſts to ſatisfy ours, it muſt, at the ſame time, be allowed, that ſuch beings would be mortal; and it muſt be proved too that the bodies of men were deſtined to be food for them. But if there be not any mortal eſſence ſuperior to man, as it is certain there is not, (ſeeing man himſelf is the laſt of all rational beings, yet ſtill immortal, though by the neceſſity of the decrees of fate he comes into a mortal body, and taking an inſtrument of the ſame nature with beaſts, he lives upon the earth,) there can be no beings more excellent than man, that make uſe of our miſerable body to ſatisfy their hunger, nor that abuſe it contrary to the eſtabliſhed order, through a deſire of ſatiating their luxury with it.

The extent of the power and authority that juſtice and order have given to ſuperior beings over us, is to do for us whatever can diminiſh our vices in this life, and to call us back to themſelves: for they take care of us, as of their relations, when we happen to fall. And hence it is that we ſay with reaſon, that the diſgrace, the puniſhment, and the ſhame that deter from evil, deter and reclaim only men; for an intelligent creature only has a

ſenſe of juſtice. Seeing then there is ſo great a difference between us and the animals without reaſon, there ought to be no leſs a difference between their way of living and ours: for the law of providence is proportioned to the nature of all things; and each being has the honour to participate of it in proportion to what it is, and to what God has made it.

Concerning the ſouls of men, it is evident that God himſelf created them; and as to the beings void of reaſon, he left it to nature only to form them; and this is the opinion of Plato and of Timæus the Pythagorean, who held, that no mortal being was worthy to be the workmanſhip of the hands of God himſelf, and that the ſouls of men were all taken out of the ſame veſſel, as were the gods of the world, the demons, and the heroes: and therefore providence extends itſelf over all men, and over each man in particular. Their abſence from their true country, their inclination to the things here below, their life that was formed and ordered in this land of exile, and their return to the place of their origin, all this is regulated by providence, which ought not to have the ſame regards for what has only an animal life; for whatever has only an animal, deſcended not

hither, becauſe it could not follow God; it is even incapable to obſerve a polity upon earth, as not being a heavenly plant, and is not of a nature to be brought back to any planet, that is conformable to it.

But we have ſaid enough for the preſent againſt ſuch as inceſſantly repine and complain of the accidents that happen in this life, and that deny providence with all their might; we may add, over and above, that to ſupport ills in patience, is not only perfectly conſonant to reaſon, but alleviates the ills for the preſent, and intirely heals them for the future. You, therefore, who are ſo apt, in your afflictions, to repine at providence, what do you gain by ſuch a conduct, but to add to your miſery the greateſt of all evils, impiety, and to aggravate them by thinking you have not deſerved them? For he who is ſick, and frets and pines at his condition, does thereby much increaſe his diſeaſe. Let us not therefore be angry at the diſpenſation of providence, under pretext of its being unjuſt, leſt by this blaſphemous crime we render our condition worſe than it is.

But let us take this affair another way, and ſuppoſe that a man, whoſe lot is poverty, bears it in patience; this patience will not only exempt him from grief and melancho-

ly, but he will find by it ſome eaſe and ſome conſolation: for, on the one hand, his underſtanding and good ſenſe not being diſordered and perplexed by his affliction, he will find out means to gain his bread honeſtly; and, on the other, his neighbours, ſtruck with admiration at his patience, ſo full of reaſon and prudence, will contribute what they can to comfort him: but he who, like the weakeſt of women, repines and flies into a paſſion, adds a voluntary and wilful grief and melancholy to his misfortune; and by keeping his mind continually bent on his miſery, and by deploring it without ceaſing, grows incapable of procuring to himſelf the leaſt relief by his labour, and puts himſelf out of a condition of receiving comfort from his neighbours, unleſs ſome one out of mere compaſſion throw him ſomething as an alms. But then too the very diſpoſition of him who gives the relief, looks like an upbraiding of his poverty, and ſerves only to increaſe the grief and melancholy of the wretch who finds himſelf reduced to ſuch extreme neceſſity.

The reſult of all we have ſaid, is, that we ought to bear in patience the accidents of this life, and endeavour as much as our ſtrength will give us leave, to remedy what is amiſs, by imputing the cauſe of our misfortunes to

the depravation of our thoughts, and by firmly believing, that ſeeing there is certainly ſuch a thing as providence, it is not poſſible that a good man ſhould be neglected, though he wear on his body the marks of his former crimes, that have drawn upon him the divine wrath; for, from the very moment that he becomes virtuous, his grief and melancholy will vaniſh away, and he will find in virtue a remedy for all his calamities, by taking, from out of himſelf, a relief againſt grief and affliction of mind, and from providence, the cure of all his ills. And indeed, ſeeing our vices, and the divine juſtice that puniſhes them, draw upon us all theſe ſcourges, it is likewiſe reaſonable, that our virtue, and the law of providence, which delivers, from all calamities, the man that applies himſelf to good, ſhould free and exempt us from them.

Thus you ſee, that from theſe virtues may be drawn many inſtructions, that contribute to form in us the firſt rudiments of virtue: for they diſcover the true reaſons of providence, of fate, and of our free-will; reaſons, by which we have endeavoured to mitigate, in this diſcourſe, the grief that the ſeeming inequality which we obſerve in the affairs of this life generally cauſes, and to prove that God is not the author of evil.

Now, the reſult of all we have been ſaying on this ſubject, is a great confirmation of the eternity and of the immortality of the ſoul: for, to obſerve juſtice, to be undaunted at the approach of death, to be free from all ſelfiſh ends, and in no wiſe dazled with the ſplendor of riches, it is requiſite we ſhould believe that the ſoul dies not with the body. And to ſupport in patience the ſtrokes of divine fortune, and to enable us to heal them, it appears to be of neceſſity, that the ſoul be not born with the body. And from theſe two things, the eternity of the ſoul and its immortality, we draw this demonſtration, that the ſoul is never born, and never dies, that it is more excellent than the body, and of another nature: for it is in no wiſe poſſible, that what is born in time ſhould exiſt always, nor that what never had a beginning, ſhould have an end: by conſequence, it is moſt evident, that ſince the ſoul continues to exiſt after the death of the body, ſince it is judged, and receives the puniſhment or reward of the life it had led; and ſeeing beſides, that it is impoſſible, that what begins in time ſhould ſubſiſt always; it is, I ſay, moſt evident, that the ſoul is from all eternity before the body; and this ſhews us, that the ſoul is one of the eternal works of God, who created it; and hence comes its

likeneſs and reſemblance to its Creator.—— But having ſufficiently ſpoken of this, it is now time to conſider what follows.

VERSES XXI. XXII. XXIII.

There are among men ſeveral ſorts of reaſonings, good and bad: — Admire them not too eaſily, nor yet altogether reject them.—But if any falſhoods are advanced, give way with mildneſs.

THE will of man not perſiſting always in virtue, nor being always bent upon vice, produces the two ſorts of reaſoning or diſcourſe, that ſavour of thoſe two conditions, and that bear the marks of thoſe two contrary diſpoſitions, in which it ſucceſſively is. Hence it comes to paſs, that of thoſe reaſonings ſome are true, others falſe; ſome good, others bad: and this difference requires, on our part, a juſt diſcretion of judgment, which is the effect of knowlege, that we may chuſe the good, and reject the bad: as likewiſe tha

we may not fall into a hatred of all ratiocinations, becauſe there are ſome bad arguments that we condemn; nor admit them all neither without diſtinction, under pretext that there are ſome good ones that we receive. For by the hatred of all reaſonings in general, we deprive ourſelves of thoſe that are good; and by admitting all without diſtinction, we expoſe ourſelves to be unawares miſled by the bad.

Let us therefore learn to love reaſonings, but with a juſt diſcernment, to the end that the love we have for them may make us hear all, and our diſcretion make us reject thoſe that are bad. In doing this, we ſhall obſerve the precept of Pythagoras; we ſhall not admire the reaſonings that are falſe, nor admit them without examination, under pretext that they are reaſonings; nor deprive ourſelves neither of thoſe that are good, under pretext likewiſe that they are as much reaſonings as the bad.

For, in the firſt place, theſe laſt ought not to be allowed merely as reaſonings, but as being true; nor ought the firſt to be rejected neither as reaſonings, but as being falſe. In the ſecond place, we may boldly aſſert, that the reaſonings only that are true, are indeed reaſonings; for ſuch alone preſerve the dig-

nity of the rational eſſence, and are the productions of a ſoul inclined to what is beſt, and that has recovered all its brightneſs, all its luſtre: whereas falſe reaſonings are not in effect reaſonings; for, ſince they lead into vice, into falſhood, and into error, they have renounced their dignity, and degenerated from it, and are properly only the exclamations of a ſoul deprived of reaſon, and blinded and depraved by its paſſions. Receive them not all then, ſays the philoſopher, leſt you ſhould receive the bad; and reject them not altogether neither, leſt you ſhould reject the good: for it is abſurd and unworthy of man, either to hate and reject good reaſonings, becauſe ſome are bad, or to love and receive the bad, becauſe ſome are good. We ought then to praiſe the good, and having received them, to meditate on them, and examine how far they carry the truth which they demonſtrate: and as to the bad, we ought to oppoſe them with all the ſtrength of logic, that we may diſcern truth from falſhood. And when we are in a condition to overthrow falſhood and error, we ought not to do it with vehemence, nor inſultingly, and with an air of contempt; but we ought to lay open the truth, and with anſwers full of mildneſs to refute falſhood. And as the

words of the verſe ſay, " If any falſhoods are " advanced, give way quietly," not in granting what is falſe, but in hearing it calmly without paſſion. For this expreſſion, " give " way with mildneſs," does not mean, that we ſhould grant what is falſe, and give our conſent to it: but it exhorts us to hear it with patience, and without being ſurprized that there are ſome men, who miſerably depart from truth. For man is naturally fruitful in ſtrange and erroneous opinions, when he follows not the common notions according to ſound reaſon.

It is not then ſurpriſing and wonderous, that a man, who never learned truth from others, nor found it of himſelf, ſhould fall into pride and folly, and advance opinions oppoſite to truth. On the contrary, it would be very aſtoniſhing indeed, if a man who would never learn, nor ever endeavour it, ſhould ſtumble upon truth by chance, as if ſome God had appeared to him all of a ſudden, as in ſome tragedies. Let us therefore hear with ſome ſort of compaſſion and indulgence the men who advance falſe opinions, and learn by that experience, from what evils we have delivered ourſelves, who, though we are of the ſame nature with thoſe deluded wretches, and conſequently ſubject to the ſame paſſions

and to the ſame weakneſſes, have nevertheleſs taken knowlege, as an antidote, which has healed this infirmity. And what moſt of all contributes to give us this calmneſs of temper, which is ſo neceſſary in diſputes, is the confidence that knowlege inſpires: for a mind that comes well provided to engage in the defence of truth, will calmly, and without any concern, ſtand the ſhock of falſe opinions, having premeditated all that can be alleged againſt truth, by inſtructing himſelf in the truth itſelf. What then can diſturb a man ſo well inſtructed? What can ſeem to him to be inextricable, what unanſwerable? All the difficulties that can be objected againſt him, will, if he be truly ſtrong, ſerve, on the contrary, only to ſupply him with ideas that have already often triumphed over whatever is falſe. It is not then from moral virtues alone that the man of knowlege will draw his tranquillity and conſtancy, but from the confidence he has in his own ſtrength for theſe ſorts of combats.

This is what we had to ſay concerning the true diſcernment of reaſoning, which is the off-ſpring of knowlege: as to the habitude the learned man ought to acquire, never to ſuffer himſelf to be deceived in any thing whatſoever, our author immediately adds what follows.

VERSES XXIV. XXV. XXVI.

Obſerve well, in every occaſion, what I am going to tell you. — Let no man, either by his words, or by his actions, ever ſeduce you;—Nor intice you to ſay or to do what is not profitable for you.

THIS is a precept of general extent, and much the ſame with that already given in the eleventh and twelfth verſes: "Never "commit any ſhameful actions, neither with "others, —nor in private with yourſelf: "but reverence yourſelf above all things;" for the man who has learned to reverence himſelf, and who neither alone nor in company, will dare to commit the leaſt ſhameful action; but out of reſpect to the reaſon he has within him, and to whoſe government and conduct he has reſigned himſelf, baniſhes far from him the very thoughts of ſuch actions; he alone, I ſay, is in a condition to obey this precept, "Let no man ever ſe-

" duce you, either by his words or by his " actions:" for he alone is incapable of being cheated and miſled, who, having a due ſenſe of his nobleneſs and dignity, ſuffers not himſelf to be cajoled by flatteries, nor intimidated by threats, whatever endeavours are uſed to that purpoſe, either by his friends or by his enemies: for the word NO MAN, includes all men whoever they be, a father, a tyrant, a friend, an enemy. And the different ways of deceiving proceed either from words or from actions; from the words of thoſe that flatter or threaten, and from the actions of thoſe that offer bribes, or that ſet before us pains and puniſhments.

Againſt all theſe things therefore let us keep our ſoul well ſtrengthened and fortified by ſound reaſon, to the end it may neither be wheedled nor inſlaved by any accidents that can happen from abroad, whether delightful or painful: for ſound reaſon having eſtabliſhed temperance and fortitude in the ſoul, as two guards that are always watchful, and cannot be corrupted, will preſerve us from being ever ſeduced, either by the charms of pleaſures, or by the dread of things that are terrible; and this it is that produces the exact juſtice, which the philoſopher has already commanded us to obſerve in our words

and in our actions. By this means no man, whoever he be, will ever prevail with us to commit the leaſt action, or to let drop the leaſt expreſſion, that is not conſonant to right reaſon; for if, above all things, we ſtand in awe of ourſelves, it is evident, that no man will appear to us to be more worthy to be reſpected or feared than ourſelves, that he ſhould induce us to do or ſay any thing contrary to our duty, both which are hurtful to the ſoul; and whatever is hurtful to it, is hurtful to us; for the ſoul is ourſelves.

Therefore you ought thoroughly to underſtand this ſaying, "What is not profitable "for you;" and refer this pronoun YOU, to what you truly are: for, if you underſtand this precept aright, "Let no man, either "by his words or by his actions, ever ſe- "duce you, nor intice you to do or ſay what "is not profitable for you;" and if you, properly ſpeaking, are the reaſonable ſoul, you will never ſuffer, if you are wiſe, any thing that can be prejudicial to you; you, I ſay, who are a rational being; for you are properly the ſoul. The body is not YOU, it is only YOURS; and all exterior things are neither you nor yours; but they belong to ſomething that is yours; that is to ſay, to your body.

If you thus diſtinguiſh and divide in this manner all theſe things, you will never confound them; you will diſcover what the eſſence of man truly is; and by taking not for it, either the body, or the things exterior to the body, you will not trouble yourſelf for this body, nor for what belongs to it, as you will do for yourſelf; to the end that ſuch a miſtaken care and concern may not inveagle you into a love of the body and of riches; for while we are abſolutely ignorant what we are ourſelves, we ſhall be ignorant likewiſe of the care we ought to take of things, and ſhall rather take care of any thing than of ourſelves, which nevertheleſs ought to be our chief concern.

And indeed, if the ſoul be what makes uſe of the body, if the body ſerve as an inſtrument to the ſoul, and if all other things were invented in favour of this inſtrument, and for the ſupport of its nature, which daily decays and periſhes, it is manifeſt that our chief and firſt care ought to be for that which is chief and firſt, and our next care for that which holds the ſecond rank. The wiſe man therefore will never neglect his health; not that he gives the firſt rank to the body, or takes it for its principal part, but that he may preſerve it in a condition to ſupply all the

wants of the ſoul, and to obey all its orders without any hinderance: and laſtly, his third care will be for what is third in order, and he will govern with prudence and œconomy all exterior things, that ſerve to the preſervation of the inſtrument, which is his body. —Thus his chief, or to ſay better, his only care ſhall be for his ſoul, ſeeing the care we have of other things, next to the ſoul, is only for the ſake of the ſoul, and tends alone to its preſervation and profit.

Now, whatever is foreign to virtue, is what this verſe here expreſſes by theſe words; "whatever is not profitable for you." If virtue is profitable for you, whatever is not virtue will be uſeleſs, nay, pernicious to you. We are therefore adviſed to throw up, as it were, a rampart around us for the preſervation and defence of virtue, by him who tells us, that we ought never to obey them that uſe their utmoſt endeavours to make us ſwerve from goodneſs, with what actions and words ſoever they accompany their perſuaſions and inſtances. For example, never let a tyrant, whether he make large promiſes, or in reality perform them, whether he endeavour to ſhake our conſtancy with threats, or to force us by puniſhments; never let a perſon who pretends to be a friend, though he hide

his ill deſigns under the outward ſhew and appearances of the moſt tender friendſhip; never, I ſay, let any of theſe prevail with us to deviate from what is uſeful to the ſoul. Now, the only things profitable to it are virtue and truth.

You will therefore be out of the reach of all frauds and of all deceits, if knowing your own eſſence, what it is, and to whom it reſembles, you take all poſſible care to preſerve that likeneſs, and if you regard every thing that can efface or change it as the greateſt misfortune that can happen you, and the greateſt loſs you can undergo. For this is the very thing which is not profitable unto you, which ſeduces you from the likeneſs of God. Seeing therefore, whatever keeps up this likeneſs in us, muſt be for our advantage, I would fain know what offer can be made us of value and moment enough to make us renounce ſo divine a good. Are the riches that may be promiſed us, or thoſe we may be threatened ſhall be taken from us, of equal concern? We are taught by the dictates of ſound reaſon how we ought to receive riches, and how to part with them. Beſides, we know the inconſtancy and the uncertainty of all theſe tranſitory goods; for though I ſhould not loſe them in this or that

manner, but defend them bravely againſt tyranny and uſurpation, may they not be taken from me by a thief? May I not loſe them by ſhipwreck? And ſhould I keep them ſafe from robbers, and from the perils of the ſea, how many other ways are there of loſing them? Let us imagine one that is very reaſonable, I mean, for the ſake of virtue; that is, to exchange all our riches for a voluntary poverty, attended with honeſty, by diveſting ourſelves of all for very good reaſons, and by purchaſing virtue at a much higher price, than what we are offered to oblige us to renounce it.

But they will ſet before our eyes torments and death; it is eaſy to anſwer to theſe menaces, that if we can but preſerve ourſelves, theſe puniſhments will not fall on us, and can affect only our bodies. Now, when the body dies, it ſuffers nothing that is contrary to nature, for it is naturally ſubject to death; it may be burnt, cut to pieces, and is expoſed to a thouſand racks, a thouſand tortures, that a diſeaſe may make it ſuffer in a more violent degree than a tyrant; why then do we fly from what it is not in our power to avoid? And why do we not rather preſerve what it is in our power to keep? As to our mortal part, do what we can, we ſhall never pre-

ſerve it from death, to which nature has condemned it; and as to our immortal part, that is to ſay, our ſoul and ourſelves, we may adorn and embelliſh it by virtue, except we ſuffer ourſelves to be terrified, and unleſs we are dejected at the thoughts of the death with which we are threatened. But if we ſuffer death for a good cauſe, we ſhall then adorn and illuſtrate the neceſſity of nature by our conſtancy, and by the uprightneſs of our will and of our choice.

Theſe are the greateſt things that one man can offer to another to ſeduce and terrify him. But what is within us is free, and ſubject to no man, unleſs we pleaſe ourſelves, and unleſs, through an inordinate love of the body and of exterior things, we betray and enſlave our freedom, by ſelling the goods of the ſoul for the vile price of a momentary life, and of riches that will certainly periſh. This precept therefore exhorts us to do, in all occaſions, the things that can alone ſecure virtue in us, and rivet it to us in ſuch a manner, that it may not be raviſhed from us either by violence, or by fraud. —— Let us now go on with the following precepts that have an evident connexion with this.

VERSES XXVII. XXVIII. XXIX.

Conſult and deliberate before you act, that you may not commit fooliſh actions. — For it is the part of a miſerable man to ſpeak and to act without reflection.— But do that which will not afflict you afterwards.

PRUDENCE of counſel brings forth virtues, perfects and preſerves them, being at once their parent, nurſe, and guardian. For, when we conſult quietly within ourſelves what courſe of life we ought to follow, we chuſe virtue for the ſake of its beauty. After this choice, the ſoul, ſtrengthened by this conſultation, encounters and ſupports all toils and conflicts on account of virtue, and being already accuſtomed to the poſſeſſion of honeſt and excellent things, it preſerves its judgment ſound and intire amidſt the troubles of the moſt grievous calamities; nor can any thing that comes from without

to diſcompoſe and diſmay it, ever oblige it to change its opinion, ſo far as to believe that there can be any other happy courſe of life, but that which, of its own free motion, it choſe and embraced, after having judged it to be the beſt and moſt excellent. Hence it comes, that there are three ſenſible effects of wiſe deliberation. Firſt, the choice of the beſt life; ſecondly, the practice of the life we have choſen; and thirdly, a conſtant and exact obſervance of what we had well and wiſely reſolved on.

The firſt of theſe three effects is the reaſon that precedes the execution of what we deſire to do, and that lays, as I may ſay, the principles of the actions. The ſecond is the reaſon that accompanies the execution, and that accommodates and adjuſts before-hand each particular action to the principles that precede it. And the third is the reaſon that follows the execution, and examining each action we have done, judges whether it was well done, and as it ought; for in all things whatever, the ſhining beauty of wiſe and prudent deliberation is eminently conſpicuous. Sometimes it produces virtues; ſometimes it nouriſhes and perfects them; and laſtly it is watchful to preſerve them; ſo that it is it-

ſelf the beginning, the middle, and the end of all good things.

In wiſe deliberation we find a deliverance from all our ills; and by it, and it alone, we are enabled to bring the virtues to perfection. For ours being an intelligent nature, and conſequently capable to conſult and deliberate; and inclining of its own free will and choice, to take a good or a bad advice; if it chuſes well, the good life it embraces, preſerves its eſſence untainted; whereas if it makes a choice without reaſon, that choice corrupts it as much as in it lyes. Now, the corruption of what is immortal is vice, the parent whereof is TEMERITY, which this verſe commands us to avoid, "that we may "not commit fooliſh actions;" and the fooliſh actions are the wicked and ill actions; for "to ſpeak and to act" without reaſon and without reflection, "is the part of a miſer-"able man;" that is to ſay, is the nature of a wicked man. But if you do deliberate before you act, you will never commit any of theſe fooliſh actions, which can only ſerve to afflict afterwards them who have acted raſhly, and without conſultation; for repentance evidently demonſtrates the badneſs of the choice, of which experience has ſhewn you the diſadvantage. As on the contrary the

effects of good conſultation are an evidence of the goodneſs and of the ſafety of the choice, by proving, even by the very actions themſelves, the advantages that reſult from them.

I ſay, the advantages, not in relation to the body, or to any exterior things, but to ourſelves, the advantage that accrues to us, who are here commanded "to conſult be-" fore we act," and to do "only the actions "that will not afflict us afterwards;" that is to ſay, "that will not afflict our ſouls." For what advantage is it to a man to heap up vaſt riches by perjuries, murders, and by all ſorts of other ill actions? What will he gain by exterior riches, if he leave his ſoul in poverty, and in the extremeſt indigence of the only goods that can be uſeful to it? To be beſides reduced to the wretched ſtate of inſenſibility, which increaſes his miſery; or, if the checks of his conſcience awaken in him a ſenſe of his crimes, to ſuffer unſpeakable tortures in his ſoul which reſult from that remorſe; to be night and day in continual dread of the puniſhments of futurity, and to find no other remedy to his ills than to have recourſe to the hopes of annihilation? For ſuch is the miſerable condition to which he is reduced, that he endeavours to heal one evil by another, and thinking by the death

of his ſoul to be freed from the puniſhments due to his crimes, he condemns himſelf to be nothing after death, that he may avoid the torments which the thoughts of the laſt judgment ſet before his eyes. For the wicked would not have his ſoul immortal, leſt it ſhould live in the other life only to ſuffer there. And in this thought he anticipates the ſentence of his judge, and condemns himſelf to eternal death, as if it were not juſt that a wicked ſoul ſhould have any exiſtence. And this wretch, who, by his raſhneſs and folly, has precipitated himſelf into vice, paſſes a ſentence againſt himſelf, conformable to his wickedneſs and crimes: but it is not the ſame thing with the judges of hell, for they give ſentence according to the rules of truth, and pronounce not that the ſoul ought to be no more, but that it ought to be no longer vicious; and they endeavour to amend and to heal it, by ordering puniſhments for the cure of nature, as phyſicians by cauſtics and inciſions cure the moſt malignant ulcers.

Theſe judges puniſh crimes in order to drive away vice by repentance; nor do they annihilate the eſſence of the ſoul, and reduce it to be no more; on the contrary, they reſtore it to its true being, by purging it from all the paſſions that corrupt it. For the very eſ-

ſence of the ſoul is in danger of being annihilated and deſtroyed, when ſwerving from its good, it plunges itſelf into what is contrary to its nature: and when it returns to what is conſonant to its nature, it finds again its being, and recovers its primitive purity, which it had depraved and corrupted by the mixture and droſs of the paſſions. We ought therefore above all things to endeavour not to ſin at all; but when we have ſinned, we ought to embrace the puniſhment, as the ſole remedy for our ſins, and as what will correct our raſhneſs and our folly by the ſalutary ſuccour of prudence and of reaſon. For the innocence we loſt by ſin, we recover by repentance, and by the good uſe we make of the puniſhments with which God chaſtiſes us to reinſtate us in our integrity.

Repentance is the beginning of philoſophy, the avoiding of all fooliſh words and actions, and the firſt ſtep of a life that will no more be ſubject to repentance: for he who prudently deliberates before he acts, never falls into involuntary and unforeſeen troubles and misfortunes, nor ever commits unwittingly any actions whoſe conſequences and events he has reaſon to apprehend: but he diſpoſes of the preſent time, and prepares himſelf to receive whatever can happen contrary to his

expectation. Therefore, neither the hope of what we call goods makes him renounce his real good, nor does the fear of evils incline him to commit real ills: but having his mind continually bent on the rules that God has preſcribed, he ſquares his whole life according to them.

But that you may know moſt aſſuredly that it is the part of a miſerable perſon indeed to ſpeak and to act without reaſon, behold Medea deploring her miſeries on our theatres. The fury of a ſenſeleſs amour ſpurred her on to betray her parents, and to run away with a foreigner; at length finding herſelf contemned and forſaken by him, ſhe thought her misfortunes inſupportable, and in that thought ſhe breaks out into this imprecation,

Let heav'n's dire thunder on my head be hurl'd.

After which ſhe falls to committing the moſt heinous of crimes. In the firſt place, it is unreaſonable and fooliſh in her to pray that what is done might be undone; and then, like a ſenſeleſs diſtracted perſon indeed, ſhe thinks to heal her ills by other ills; hoping to efface the beginning of her miſeries by a yet more miſerable end, for ſhe madly endeavours, by the murder of her children, to

atone for her marriage, to which ſhe had conſented raſhly and without reflection.

And if you have a mind to ſee how Homer's Agamemnon behaves himſelf, you will find that prince, when he is puniſhed for not having bridled his rage, crying out with tears in his eyes,

I'm loſt! undone! and all my ſtrength forſakes me.

And in the ill ſtate of his affairs, he quenches with a flood of tears that fire of his eyes which rage had kindled in his proſperity.

This is the life of every fooliſh and inconſiderate man. He is driven and toſſed to and fro by contrary paſſions: inſupportable in proſperity, dejected in adverſity: imperious and haughty when he hopes, cowardly and crouching when he fears. In a word, not having the generous conſtancy that prudent deliberation inſpires, he veers about with every blaſt of fortune.

That we therefore may not furniſh the public with theſe ſorts of ſcenes, let us take ſound reaſon for our guide in all our actions, imitating Socrates, who ſomewhere ſays, "You know that I am not now to begin to "accuſtom myſelf not to obey ANY OF MINE, "except the reaſon which, after due exa- "mination, appears to be moſt juſt and up-

"right." By this expreſſion, ANY OF MINE, he means all his ſenſes. And indeed all the things that are given us to be ſubſervient to reaſon, as anger, love, ſenſe, and even the body itſelf, which is to ſerve as an inſtrument to all theſe faculties; all theſe things, I ſay, are OURS, but not US; and we ought to obey none of them, except, as Socrates ſays, ſound reaſon alone; that is to ſay, the rational part of us, which is diſpoſed according to its nature. For, it is that alone can ſee and know what ought to be done and ſaid.

Now, to obey ſound reaſon, and to obey God, are the ſame thing; for our intelligent part being inlightened by the irradiation that is natural and proper to it, wills nothing but what the law of God requires; and a ſoul well diſpoſed according to God, is always of the ſame mind with God; and whatever it does, it keeps the divinity, and the ſplendid brightneſs that ſurround it, always in its ſight. Whereas the ſoul diſpoſed in a contrary manner, and that is intent on what is out of God, and full of darkneſs, is carried here and there, as it were, at a venture, and wanders without keeping any certain road, being deſtitute of underſtanding, and fallen

from God; which are the only true rule of all that is great and good.

Theſe are the great and infinite advantages that ariſe from prudent and wiſe deliberation, and the great miſchiefs that neceſſarily follow temerity and want of reflection. But beſides all theſe great advantages of which we have ſpoken, "to conſult before we act," produces one more of vaſt importance, which is, that it checks all the motions of opinion, brings us to the true knowlege of things, and makes us lead a life that cannot fail to be moſt pleaſant, ſince it muſt be moſt juſt and good; as will appear by what follows.

VERSES XXX. XXXI.

Never do any thing which you do not underſtand; — But learn all that you ought to know, and by that means you will lead the moſt pleaſant life.

NOT to undertake the things we do not underſtand, will hinder us only from committing of errors; but to learn that which leads to a good life, not only prevents us

from committing faults, but directs our actions, and gives us ſucceſs in all our undertakings. The knowlege of our own ignorance curbs the temerity that opinion excites, and the acquiſition of knowlege ſecures the ſucceſs of all our enterprizes.

Now, theſe are two excellent things, "To "know that we do not know, and to learn "what we are ignorant of;" and they are followed by the beſt and moſt delicious life. But this happy life is only for him who is free from opinion, and repleniſhed with knowlege; who is not puffed up with vanity on account of any thing that he knows, and who is deſirous to learn whatever deſerves to be learned. Now, nothing deſerves to be learned but that which brings us to the divine likeneſs; — which inclines us to deliberate before we act, that we may not be guilty of any fooliſh actions; —which puts us in a condition not to be deceived and miſled by any man, either by his words, or by his actions; — which capacitates us to diſcern the difference of the reaſons and arguments which we hear; — which makes us bear in patience the divine fortune, and that ſupplies us with means to mend it; — which teaches us not to dread death nor poverty, and to practiſe juſtice; — which makes us temperate in all

things that are called pleaſures; — which inſtructs us in the laws of friendſhip, and of the reſpect due to thoſe that gave us life; and laſtly, — which ſhews us the honour and the worſhip we ought to render to the ſuperior beings.

Theſe are the things which this verſe tells us that we ought to learn, and that they are attended by a moſt pleaſant life: for he who diſtinguiſhes himſelf by his virtue, enjoys pleaſures that are never followed by repentance, and that imitate the ſolidity and permanency of the virtues that procure them. For all pleaſure is naturally the conſequence of ſome action, whatever it be; pleaſure ſubſiſts not by itſelf, but arrives when we do ſuch or ſuch an action. Hence it is that pleaſure always follows the nature of the action that produces it: the worſt actions produce the worſt pleaſures, and the beſt actions produce likewiſe the beſt pleaſures; ſo that the virtuous ſurpaſſes the vicious not only in regard to the beauty of the action, but has the advantage of him too in the kind of the pleaſure, for the ſake of which alone the vicious ſeems to have plunged himſelf into vice.

And indeed, as much as one diſpoſition is better than another diſpoſition, ſo much too

is one pleaſure preferable to another pleaſure: therefore, ſeeing a virtuous life, in which viſibly appears the likeneſs of God, is truly divine; and ſeeing a vicious life is brutal and without God; it is evident, that the pleaſure of the virtuous imitates and approaches the divine pleaſure, in following the dictates of the underſtanding, and even God himſelf; and that the pleaſure of the vicious (for I am content to call them both by the ſame name) imitates only the brutal gratifications of a ſenſual appetite, the delight of beaſts. For pleaſures and ſorrows change us, and alter our conditions. Pleaſures are placed within our reach, and he that enjoys them when, where, and as much as he ought, is happy; and he that knows not theſe juſt bounds is unhappy. Thus therefore the life void of opinion is exempt only from ſin; and the life that is full of knowlege is always happy and perfect, and by conſequence the beſt, and at the ſame time the moſt delightful.

Let us then never do what we know not how to do; and as to what we underſtand, let us do it when we ought. Ignorance produces faults, and knowlege ſeeks THE OPPORTUNITY; for many things that are very good in themſelves, become bad when they are

done out of ſeaſon. Let us then obey this precept in order; inaſmuch as it commands us to check and keep back our actions, it endeavours to render us free from faults; and as it commands us to learn, not every thing, but what deſerves to be learned, it excites us to honeſt and virtuous actions; for a good life conſiſts not in being exempt from faults, but in doing all that ought to be done. For the firſt, it is ſufficient to purge the opinion; but the laſt can be nothing but the effect of knowlege.

Now, from the one and the other, that is to ſay, from living exempt from faults, and from living a good life, behold the advantage will accrue to you, "You ſhall lead a "moſt pleaſant life." What is this delightful life? The life that enjoys all the pleaſure that ariſes from virtue, and in which the good and the delightful meet each other: if therefore we deſire what is good, and at the ſame time what is pleaſant, what will ſuch a mixture be, but what this verſe tells us, a moſt delicious life? For he that chuſes the pleaſant with the ſhameful, though for a little time he enjoy the charms of the pleaſure, yet what there is of ſhameful in the enjoyment, will ſoon throw him into the bitterneſs of repentance: whereas he that chuſes

the good with the painful, though at firſt the taſk ſit heavy on him, the good will ſoon alleviate and leſſen his toils; and in the end he will enjoy with virtue, all the fruits of pure and unmixed delight.

To conclude; if we do any ſhameful thing with pleaſure, the pleaſure paſſes, but the ſhame remains: but if we do any good thing with a thouſand toils, a thouſand difficulties, the toils and difficulties will all vaniſh away and be forgotten, and the good alone will remain with us. From whence it neceſſarily follows, that an ill life is very ſorrowful and troubleſome, and that on the contrary a good life is moſt delightful and pleaſant.

Let this ſuffice for the underſtanding of theſe verſes.——But ſeeing the care of the body conduces to the perfection of the ſoul, let us ſee what the philoſopher next adds.

VERSES XXXII. XXXIII. XXXIV.

In no wiſe neglect the health of your body; — But give it drink and meat in due meaſure, and alſo the exerciſe of which it has need. — Now, by MEASURE I mean what will not incommode you.

THIS mortal body having been given us as an inſtrument for the life we are to lead here below, we ought neither to pamper it by too indulgent a treatment, nor to pinch and bring it low by too auſtere and ſparing a diet; for the one and the other produce the ſame impediments, and hinder the uſe we ought to make of it. Therefore we are here exhorted to take a moderate care of it, and not to neglect it, neither when it is grown rebellious by too high a feeding, nor when it is mortified and brought down by ſickneſs; to the end, that being kept in the temper in which it naturally ought to be,

it may perform all the functions that the ſoul, which guides it, ſhall require of it. For the ſoul makes uſe of the body, and the body ſerves the ſoul. The workman then is obliged to take care of the inſtrument he employs; for it is not enough to deſire only to make uſe of it, but all the reaſonable and neceſſary care muſt likewiſe be taken, to keep it always in a condition to execute our orders.

And becauſe it is naturally in a continual ſtate of generation and of corruption, and ſeeing repletion and evacuation entertain and nouriſh it, ſometimes aliment making good and repairing what is waſted, and ſometimes exerciſe evacuating and carrying off what abounds, we ought to fix a due meaſure, as well of the nouriſhment that cauſes the repletion, as of the exerciſe that cauſes the evacuation. And this due meaſure is the reaſon that adapts the habitude of the body to the intellectual operations of the ſoul, and which, by this means, takes ſuch a care of the health of the body, as ſuits and becomes a philoſopher.

This reaſon, therefore, will make choice of ſuch food and exerciſe, as will not make the body too fat, nor hinder it from following the intellectual motions of the mind: for it is not merely a body of which it takes care; but a body that is ſubſervient to the thoughts

of the ſoul. It therefore rejects the athletic regimen or courſe of life, becauſe that takes care only of the body, without having any regard to the ſoul; and it avoids all ſuperfluous care of the body, as being intirely contrary to the intelligent light of the ſoul. But the regimen of life, which, by the good habit it procures to the body, can moſt of all contribute to the requiſite diſpoſitions for learning the ſciences, and to the performance of all good and honourable actions, is that which ought to be choſen by the man who is deſirous to embrace the life of reaſon; for to him theſe words are addreſſed, "Now, I "call meaſure that which will not incom-"mode you."

Let not then the meaſure of the care you take of your body incommode you in the leaſt. For it becomes you who obſerve the former precepts, to uſe ſuch drink, meat, and exerciſe, as will render the body obedient to the commands of virtue, and as will not provoke the ſenſual and brutal part to be refractory and unruly againſt reaſon that guides it: but this meaſure of the care that ought to be had of the body, muſt be proportioned with much attention and prudence, it being the firſt cauſe of all its inordinate deſires: for the horſe grows vicious, and

prances, only when he is fed too high, and not well managed by his rider.

Our author, ſpeaking of the meaſure that ought to be obſerved for the body, has put DRINK before MEAT, as it is more difficult to forbear it, both becauſe men are more ſubject to make an ill uſe of it, and becauſe drink diſorders moſt the good habit of the body: for, unleſs a man be very careful, he will much ſooner exceed the juſt meaſure in drinking, than in eating; and he puts EXERCISE in the third place, becauſe it corrects the repletion cauſed by nouriſhment, and prepares the body to convert the food to a more healthy nouriſhment. For theſe two things run in a circle, and naturally ſucceed each other: nouriſhment and exerciſe; exerciſe and nouriſhment. Good nouriſhment gives occaſion for good exerciſe; and good exerciſe, for good nouriſhment.

Now, the meaſure of each of them is not the ſame for every man, each man taking care of his body according to his particular ends, and according to the ſervice he would have of it; for all men endeavour to accommodate their bodies to the profeſſion they have embraced. The wreſtler prepares his for the motions of the ring; the farmer, for the toils of huſbandry; and another forms and

trains up his for another ſervice. But what muſt the philoſopher do? what is his proſpect? what his deſign in taking care of his body? and of what myſtery will he make it an inſtrument? Certainly of philoſophy and all its labours. He will therefore ſo nouriſh and exerciſe his body, that it may, as much as poſſible, become an inſtrument of prudence and of wiſdom, always taking care chiefly and firſt of all for the ſoul, and for the ſake of that only, for the body. For he will never prefer the part that ſerves, to the part that is ſerved; neither will he abſolutely neglect the firſt for the ſake of the other, but he will take care of the body in the rank and place that is proper and fitting, whoſe health and good condition he values no farther, than as they help to perfect the virtue of the ſoul, that makes uſe of the body.

Thus you ſee why he will not nouriſh it with all ſorts of food, but with thoſe alone that are proper nouriſhment for it. For there are ſome that we ought not to offer it, becauſe they make the body heavy and ſluggiſh, and drag the ſoul into all ſorts of earthly and carnal affection; and of theſe it is the philoſopher ſpeaks towards the end of theſe verſes, when he ſays, "But abſtain with judgment from the ali-
"ments we have forbidden in the book con-

" cerning the luſtrations and expiations of " the ſoul."

Let him then intirely reject all theſe ſorts of food, and as to thoſe that he may eat, let him regulate the quantity and the time of eating; and, as Hippocrates ſays, let him reflect on the ſeaſon, the place, the age, and the like circumſtances: neither ought he to allow himſelf all manner of food with which he may nouriſh himſelf, without reflection and examination; nor ſhall he appoint the ſame diet indifferently to the young and the old, to the ſick and the healthy, to him who is but newly entered in the ſtudy of philoſophy, and to him who has already made a great proficiency in it, or who is arrived to the perfection of it. The Pythagorean meaſure includes all theſe things in the words that he adds, " which will not incommode " you:" for in thoſe few words he refers to the care of the body all that tends or contributes to philoſophical happineſs, and after what he ſaid concerning the welfare of the ſoul, he adds, that the health of the body ought in no wiſe to be neglected: ſo that there he teaches us wherein conſiſts the perfection of the ſoul that makes uſe of the body, and here what procures the health and preſervation of the body, that ſerves as an in-

ſtrument to the ſoul. Join then theſe two things together, and you will find, whoever you are, to whom theſe precepts are addreſſed, that you ought to take for the moſt due meaſure of the care that ought to be had of the body, "that which will not incommode you;" that is to ſay, that which will not hinder your philoſophical purpoſe, and that will help and further the progreſs of the ſoul in the ways of virtue.

He calls it the meaſure of drinking and of eating, becauſe he equally forbids the two extremes, and allows only the middle between them, that is, the moderate: and by this moderation alone we come to get the maſtery of gluttony, ſloth, luxury, and anger. For the meaſure, here ſpoken of, condemns all exceſs in theſe ſorts of things, and excludes whatever is hurtful, and that debaſes and drags down the ſoul, which aſpires towards the Intelligence, that is, towards God; for it is requiſite, that the ſoul which aſpires towards the intelligent Mind, ſhould enjoy an entire tranquillity, and not be diſcompoſed by the violence of the paſſions; and that all things below be ſubject to her, that ſhe may attend quietly to the contemplation of the things above. "This is the "meaſure that will not incommode you;"

this is that which will enable you to ſubdue your paſſions, that will preſerve the health of your body, that will diſcover to you the virtue of the ſoul, and that will not ſpoil nor deſtroy the good habit of the inſtrument of which the ſoul makes uſe; for it is a part of virtue to know how to preſerve the body, and how to render it fit for all the ſervices that philoſophy may require of it.

But ſince the care of the body conſiſts not only in drinking, in eating, and in exerciſe; and in regard it has need of many other things, as clothes, ſhoes, houſhold-ſtuff, and places to lodge in, and ſince in all theſe things we ought to obſerve a due meaſure, that baniſhes alike all luxury and ſordidneſs, the philoſopher, with good reaſon, ſubjoins,

VERSES XXXV. XXXVI. XXXVII. XXXVIII.

Accuſtom yourſelf to a way of living that is neat and decent, without luxury.—Avoid all things that will occaſion envy.—And be not expenſive out of ſeaſon, like one who knows not what is decent and honourable.—Neither be covetous nor niggardly: mediocrity is beſt in all things.

IT is not only in drinking and in eating that we are to obſerve a meaſure, ſays the author of theſe verſes, but alſo in all other things; for meaſure is equally diſtant from too little and too much, becauſe in every thing we may doubly exceed this due meaſure, either by being too magnificent or too niggardly; both which are blameable, unworthy the manners of a philoſopher, and far from the mediocrity we ought to obſerve in every thing that relates to the body; for

too much neatneſs drives into luxury and effeminacy, and too much ſimplicity and plainneſs degenerates often into ſordid covetouſneſs.

To avoid, therefore, falling into the firſt defect, through too much neatneſs, or into the ſecond through too much ſimplicity, let us keep the mean between them, declining the neighbouring vices of theſe two virtues, and in making both of them ſerve for a corrective remedy to each other. Let us embrace a plain way of life, ſo as not to be ſlovenly, and a neat way, ſo as not to be nice and luxurious. Thus we ſhall obſerve the due meaſure in all that relates to the body; our apparel will be neat and clean, but not coſtly and magnificent; our houſe and table will be neat, but not ſplendid and luxurious; and let us behave ourſelves in like manner as to our furniture and every thing elſe: for ſeeing the reaſonable ſoul commands over the body, it is juſt and decent, that whatever relates to the body, ſhould be ordered by reaſon, which being perſuaded every thing ought to be anſwerable to its dignity, will ſuffer neither luxury nor ſordidneſs. To ſhun therefore magnificence it has recourſe to ſimplicity; and to avoid what is ſlovenly and unſeemly, it chuſes neatneſs.

For example; reaſon would not have our clothes be of fine ſtuffs, but of neat; it requires not that we ſhould eat out of gold or ſilver, but out of ſomething cheap and cleanly; it deſires not a houſe fitted up and adorned with marble and other coſtly ſtones, nor of a ſuperfluous ſize and beauty, but proportioned to the uſe we are to make of it.

In a word, neatneſs throughout the whole courſe of life excludes luxury, and admits ſimplicity as alone ſufficient to ſupply all our neceſſities; and indeed, clothes, houſe, houſhold-ſtuff, and the like, are then chiefly fit for our uſe, when they are neat and becoming our conditions. For what need of a great diſh for a ſmall piece of meat? And why a ſordid one, but to ſpoil, and make us lothe it? What need of a great houſe for a man who takes up but one corner of it? And why too a naſty houſe that cannot be dwelt in? In like manner of all things beſides, you will find that all is uſeleſs and of no ſervice, except where ſimplicity and neatneſs meet together: for when you have once tranſgreſſed the meaſure of need, you throw yourſelf into the immenſity of deſire.

Let all things therefore, neceſſary for life, be tempered with ſo juſt a mean, as equally to decline the two contrary extremes: "Accuſtom

"yourſelf," ſays he, "to a neat manner of "living;" but perceiving afterwards that this neatneſs might throw us into luxury, he adds, "and without luxury:" he would only have ſaid, "accuſtom yourſelf to a way "of living without luxury," but that he foreſaw that ſuch a ſimplicity might be apt to make us fall into ſordidneſs; therefore he joined theſe two together, "neat and with-"out luxury;" to prevent our falling into the exceſs of either, by the counterpoiſe of one againſt the other, to the end that from both of them might proceed a maſculine ſort of life, ſuch as becomes a rational creature.

By ordering our life in this manner, we ſhall gain another great advantage, in avoiding the envy that attends all extremes, unleſs by running headlong into exceſs, in all things, we provoke our neighbours, ſometimes to hate us for our luxury, ſometimes to complain of our ſordidneſs, now to accuſe us of prodigality, and then to reproach us for ſtinginеſs and meanneſs of ſoul; for all theſe exceſſes make us alike incur the blame of thoſe among whom we live. And this is what the word ENVY in this place properly ſignifies: for in bidding us "avoid to do what "will procure us envy," he means, what juſtly will expoſe us to the blame of men. Now,

reaſon, and the general voice of the world, blame luxury and ſordidneſs in the manner of living, and profuſeneſs and niggardlineſs in œconomy: decency therefore and mediocrity in all exterior things ſhew the good diſpoſition of our ſoul, and let us ſee that a due meaſure is beſt in every thing: for the man who loves his repoſe ought, as much as poſſible, to ſhun all occaſions of envy, and to be as much afraid of provoking it, as of rouzing a ſleeping lion, to the end that without any diſturbance he may advance in the ſtudy of virtue.

We ſhall live exempt from envy if we embrace a mean but decent way of life, and decline the pompous pageantry of thoſe who are ignorant in what decency and true honour conſiſt; from which ignorance of theirs two great evils ariſe, an unſeaſonable profuſion or too much thriftineſs; the firſt of which is blamed as pride, the laſt as meanneſs of ſpirit. Thoſe two extremes are avoided by liberality, a virtue which conſiſts in giving and in receiving; which, in the income, as well as the expence, always follows what is decent and honourable, and which orders all exterior things according to ſound reaſon.

Theſe are the profound reflections that this philoſopher gives us in theſe verſes, con-

cerning the uſe we ought to make of our body and of all exterior things, to the end that by their means the beauty of virtue may be viſible in all our conduct.

Now, the following precept is only a ſummary of what he has been ſaying.

VERSE XXXIX.

Do only the things that cannot hurt you, and deliberate before you do them.

THIS is a precept which he has already often given us; firſt in theſe words, "But do that which will not afflict you afterwards:" and again, "Now I call measure that which will not incommode you;" and in a third place, "Let no man ever ſeduce you, either by his words or by his actions; nor let him intice you to do or to ſay what is not profitable for you." And here, by this ſhort recapitulation, he ſets again before our eyes all theſe precepts, by adviſing us to abſtain from every thing that may hurt us, and to do all that may be of uſe to us.

Now, it is eaſy to diſtinguiſh between theſe two ſorts of actions, if we deliberate before we act, and reflect what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done; and the time for deliberation and conſultation is while matters are yet entire, and before we have ſet our hands to the work. And as to what he ſays in this place, "the things which can-"not hurt you," we will explain it as we have already explained the precept he gave us before, when he ſaid, "what will not af-"flict you," and ſay, that by YOU, he means that which is indeed man, the rational being; that is to ſay, the man who has embraced wiſdom, and who uſes all his endeavours to render himſelf like God: for this inward man is wounded by whatever is contrary to right reaſon, by whatever is contrary to the divine law, and by whatever hinders the reſemblance with God, and that deſtroys his image in us. And all theſe things generally proceed from the converſation of thoſe with whom we live, from the care we have of the body, to which we are united, and from the uſe we make of riches, which were invented only to be a help to the body, and which, for that rea-ſon, are called by a name, that implies, that they ought to be made uſe of for the neceſſi-ties of the body.

He therefore, ſays our author, who is inflamed with the love of divine good, ought to take great care never to be prevailed with to do what is not uſeful for him, never to allow his body what will be hurtful for himſelf, never to receive or admit any thing that can take him off from the ſtudy of wiſdom, and of which he will have cauſe ſoon to repent. We ought to prevent all theſe things by deliberating before we act, to the end that when we come to examine into all our paſt actions, we may remember them with pleaſure and delight. And this is his deſign in the following verſes.

VERSES
XL. XLI. XLII. XLIII. XLIV.

Never ſuffer ſleep to cloſe your eyelids, after going to bed, — 'Till you have examined, by your reaſon, all your actions of the day. — Wherein have I done amiſs? what have I done? what have I omitted that I ought to have done? — If in this examination, you find that you have done amiſs, reprimand yourſelf ſeverely for it: and if you have done any good, rejoice.

HERE you ſhould recollect in your memory all the precepts already given you, to the end that regarding them as divine laws, you may make a juſt examination in the inward tribunal of your ſoul, of all you have done well or done amiſs: for how can the inquiry into our paſt actions enable us to diſtinguiſh when to reprimand, and

when to praiſe ourſelves, if the deliberation that precedes them had not placed before us certain laws and rules, according to which we ought to regulate our life, and which ought to be in regard to us as a divine mark, according to which we are to direct all the receſſes of our conſcience. Pythagoras requires us to make this examination daily, that, by frequent and aſſiduous recollection, our memory may be the more certain and the more infallible. And he will have us do it every evening before we go to ſleep, to the end that each night, after all the actions of the day, we may take an exact account of them before the tribunal of conſcience; and that this ſevere examination of our diſpoſitions may be as a hymn of praiſe for us to ſing to God, at our going to bed: "Wherein have I done amiſs? what have "I done? what have I omitted that I ought "to have done?" By this means the whole tenor of our life will be ordered according to the precepts that have been preſcribed us, and we ſhall conform our reaſon that judgeth, to the divine intelligence that made the law.

For what ſays the legiſlator? That we ought to honour the ſuperior beings according to the order and rank of their eſſence; that we ought to have much veneration and

reſpect for our parents, and relations; to love and embrace good men; to keep in ſubjection our paſſions and worldly deſires; to reverence ourſelves every where, and in all things; to practiſe juſtice; to conſider the ſhortneſs of life, and the inſtability of riches; to receive with ſubmiſſion the lot which the divine judgment ſends us; to take delight only in the thoughts that are worthy of God; to keep our mind continually bent on what is moſt excellent; to love and embrace only the diſcourſes that are good and ſolid; to put ourſelves out of a condition of being ſurprized or enſlaved, that we may preſerve the precious depoſitum of virtue; to conſult before we act, that repentance may not be the fruit of all we do; to free ourſelves from all opinion and obſtinacy; to ſeek after the life of knowlege, and to apply and adapt our body, and all exterior things, to the functions of virtue.

Theſe are the laws that the divine Intelligence impoſes on the ſoul; and no ſooner has reaſon received them, but ſhe becomes a very watchful guardian over herſelf, "What "have I done amiſs? what have I done?" ſays ſhe every day, regularly calling to mind all her actions, good and bad. And if at the end of this examination ſhe find that ſhe

has passed the day without violating any of these laws, she makes herself a garland of the fruits of divine joy; and if she catches herself in any crime, she then punishes herself by the severe correction of repentance, as by astringent remedies.

Thus you see, says the philosopher, why you ought to banish sleep, to give time to reason to make this examination. The body will easily dispense with being thus kept awake, not having contracted a necessity of sleeping, by reason of its prudent and temperate diet, by which means even our most natural passions are subjected to the empire of reason.

"Never therefore suffer sleep to close your "eye-lids after going to bed, 'till you have "first examined by your reason, all your ac-"tions of the day:" and what is this examination? "In what have I done amiss? "what have I done? what have I omitted "that I ought to have done?" For we are faulty two ways; either "by doing what we ought not to do," which is expressed in these questions: "In what have I done amiss? "what have I done?" or in not doing what we ought to do, which is expressed word for word in this verse; "What "have I omitted of what I ought to have "done?" For it is one thing to omit the

good, and another to commit evil; one is a crime of omiſſion, the other of commiſſion: for example; "We ought always to pray, "and never to blaſpheme: we ought to nou-"riſh our parents; and we ought never to "uſe them ill." He who keeps not the two firſt points of theſe two precepts, does not do what he ought, and he who tranſgreſſes the two laſt, does what he ought not, though it may be ſaid, that both theſe precepts are in ſome manner alike, ſeeing they throw us into the tranſgreſſion of the ſame law.

Thus the philoſopher exhorts us to make an examen into all the actions of the day, from the firſt to the laſt, in order, without forgetting the actions of the middle; which is expreſſed in theſe words, "Continue to go "on in this manner;" for it often happens that the tranſpoſition deceives the judgment, and makes it favour ſome actions, which, had the memory recollected them in order, would have been inexcuſable. Moreover, this recapitulation of the life we have led in the day, refreſhes in us the remembrance of all our paſt actions, and awakens us to the thoughts of immortality.

And it is worth our taking notice, that our author, when he commands us to examine each action, adds not to this method of re-

collection, " Wherein have I done well? " what have I done that I ought to have " done?" But that all at once he carries our memory to what will moſt humble our pride, by adviſing us to make an inquiry into our offences; " Wherein have I done amiſs? " what have I done?" etc. And he has appointed us a moſt juſt and natural judge, our own conſcience, and ſound reaſon, by appointing ourſelves to be judges of ourſelves; ourſelves, I ſay, whom we have been taught particularly to revere: for, who can reprehend another as he can reprehend himſelf? He that is free, making uſe of his liberty, rejects the admonitions of others, when he has no mind to obey them; but our conſcience that acts within us, is of neceſſity forced to hearken to itſelf.

This is the governor that God has given us; this is our preceptor and teacher; this is the judge whom reaſon has given us to determine of all our actions of the day. It is of this, and this alone, that it receives the accuſations and the ſentence, to the end, that giving judgment itſelf in its own cauſe, it may condemn or acquit itſelf by its own ſuffrage accordingly as it deſerves to be condemned or acquitted: for after having read in its memory, as in a regiſter, all that it

has done, then, regarding the law as the exemplar that it ought to follow, it pronounces judgment, and declares itſelf worthy of praiſe or of blame. This courſe, if daily followed, perfects the divine image in him who obſerves it, by adding or retrenching every day ſomething, till he arrive at his perfection, and till the whole beauty of virtue be reſplendently conſpicuous in him. This is what completes and perfects the good man, as far as it is poſſible for him to attain in this life.

So much for the inſtructions concerning civil virtue.——He now proceeds to the precepts which make us more particularly reſemble God.

VERSES XLV. XLVI. XLVII. XLVIII.

Practiſe thoroughly all theſe things; meditate on them well; and love them with all your heart.—Theſe will lead you into the way of divine virtue. —I ſwear it by him who has tranſmitted into our ſoul the ſacred quaternion,—The ſource of nature, whoſe courſe is eternal.

THIS is what I have already ſaid in the introduction, that practical philoſophy makes a man good, by the acquiſition of virtue; that contemplative philoſophy makes him like God, by the irradiation of underſtanding, and of truth; and that in reference to us, ſmall things ought neceſſarily to precede the greater; for, it is eaſier to conform human life to the rules of reaſon, than it is to incline it to what is moſt divine and moſt high; which cannot be done but

by giving ourſelves wholly up to contemplation.

Beſides, it is impoſſible we ſhould enjoy truth undiſturbed, if our ſenſible faculties are not in intire ſubjection to the moral virtues, according to the law of the underſtanding; for the ratibnal ſoul, being of a middle nature between the pure mind, and a privation of reaſon, cannot inſeparably adhere to the mind above it, till being purified and freed from all affection for the things that are below, it makes uſe of them with purity: and it will be pure when it ſuffers not itſelf to be ſeduced and led aſtray by what is void of reaſon, nor by this mortal body; and if it takes no farther care of it than of things that are foreign to it, and than as is permitted by the law of God, which forbids us in any manner to throw off the chain, but commands us to wait till God himſelf comes to deliver us from that captivity.

Such a ſoul therefore will ſtand in need of a twofold virtue; of civil, to regulate and moderate the rage of deſire, that inclines it towards the things here below; and of contemplative, to raiſe it up towards the things above, and to unite it to the divine excellency. Between theſe two virtues, the philoſopher has put two verſes, to be, as it were,

the boundaries to divide them. The firſt, "Practiſe thoroughly all theſe things, me-"ditate on them well; and love them with "all your heart," is a very proper end and concluſion of civil virtue; and the laſt, "Theſe will lead you into the way of divine "virtue," is the beginning of ſpeculative knowlege, and, as it were, a noble entry that leads to it; for this beginning promiſes to him who has laid aſide the ſenſual life, who has delivered himſelf as much as poſſible from the exceſs of paſſions, and who thereby, from brute that he was before, is become man; it promiſes him, I ſay, that from man that he is, he ſhall commence a god, as much as it is poſſible for human nature to participate of the divine eſſence.

Now, that this deifies us, and that this is the end of contemplative truth, is evident by theſe verſes, which he puts at the end of this treatiſe, as a noble concluſion that leaves us no room to wiſh for more: "And when, "after having diveſted your mortal body, "you are received into the pure æther, you "ſhall be an immortal god, incorruptible, "and over whom death ſhall have no more "dominion:" for it is of neceſſity that we ſhall obtain this happy re-eſtabliſhment to our primitive ſtate; that is to ſay, this glo-

rious apotheoſis, by the conſtant practice of virtue, and by the knowlege of truth. And this is what this ſacred book evidently demonſtrates to us, as we ſhall ſee anon.

Let us now return to the verſes at preſent before us, and conſider whether theſe words, TO PRACTISE, TO MEDITATE, and TO LOVE, ſpeaking of the precepts already given, ſignify any thing elſe than to apply our whole ſoul to the practice of virtue: for our ſoul being a reaſonable ſubſtance, has neceſſarily three faculties; the firſt is that by which we learn, and this is the faculty which is commanded TO MEDITATE: the ſecond is that whereby we retain what we learn, and put it in practice; and this is the faculty which is required TO PRACTISE and TO EXERCISE: and the third is that by which we love what we have learned, and what we practiſe; and this is the faculty which is exhorted TO LOVE all theſe things.

To the end, therefore, that all the faculties of our rational ſoul may apply themſelves to thoſe precepts of virtue, and be wholly intent on them, of the intelligent faculty he requires meditation; of the active, practice and exerciſe; and of the faculty that loves, he demands love; that by their means we may acquire the things that are truly good;

that we may preſerve them by exerciſe, and always have for them an innate love in our hearts. Such a diſpoſition as this never fails to be attended by divine hope, which makes the ſplendor of truth be as eminently conſpicuous in our ſouls, as he himſelf promiſes us, when he ſays, "They will lead you into "the way of divine virtue;" that is to ſay, they will make you like God by the certain knowlege of all beings: for the knowlege of the cauſes of beings, I ſay, of the cauſes, which are originally in the intelligence of God their Creator, "as eternal exemplars," leads us to the ſublimeſt pitch of the knowlege of God, which is followed by a perfect reſemblance with him: and this is that reſemblance which is here called DIVINE VIRTUE, as being much ſuperior to human virtue that precedes it, and is, as it were, the foundation of it.

The firſt part of theſe verſes concludes with the love of philoſophy, and of whatever is great and excellent: this love going firſt, is followed by the knowlege of truth; and this truth leads us to a perfect reſemblance with the divine virtue, as we ſhall ſee in the enſuing diſcourſe. The neceſſity of the union, and of the connexion of all theſe things, is here confirmed by oath: for the

philoſopher ſwears with much fervency, that the perfect acquiſition of human virtue leads us to the likeneſs with God. And as to the precept he gave us at the beginning of the verſes, "Reſpect the oath," he commands us thereby to forbear ſwearing in caſual things, whoſe event is uncertain; for ſuch things are of ſmall moment, and ſubject to change; therefore it is neither juſt nor ſafe to ſwear concerning them: but concerning the things here ſpoken of, whoſe connexion is fixed by neceſſity, and whoſe conſequence is very great, we may ſwear ſafely, and with all manner of decency and juſtice: for neither their inſtability will deceive us, ſince, being linked by the law of neceſſity, they cannot but arrive; nor their meanneſs and obſcurity render them unworthy to be confirmed by the teſtimony and intervention of the Divinity. And if virtue and truth are found in men, much more are they viſible in the ſuperior beings.

Moreover, this oath is in this place a precept, that we ought to honour him, who inſtructs us in the truth, ſo far as even to ſwear by him, if it be neceſſary for the confirmation of his doctrine; and not to ſay barely of him, "he ſaid it;" but to aſſert with confidence, "the things are thus, I ſwear it by "himſelf." Now, by ſwearing concerning

the neceſſary connexion and union of theſe moſt perfect habitudes, he enters into the very foundation of theology, and manifeſtly demonſtrates, that the quaternion, or number of four, which is the ſource of the eternal order of the world, is nothing elſe than God himſelf, who has created all things. But how comes God to be the quaternion? This you may learn in the holy book that is aſcribed to Pythagoras *, and in which God is celebrated as the number of numbers. For if all things exiſt by his eternal decrees, it is evident, that in each ſpecies of things the number depends on the cauſe that produced them. There we find the firſt number, and from thence it is come to us. Now, the finite interval of number is ten, for he who would reckon more after ten, comes back to one, two, three, till by adding the ſecond decad he makes twenty, by adding the third decad in like manner he makes thirty, and ſo goes on by tens till he comes to a hundred. After a hundred he comes back again to one, two, three, and thus the interval of ten al-

* The book, here referred to, and which is now loſt, was a treatiſe concerning the Gods, and was intitled, Ἱερὸς Λόγος. It is ſaid, that Pythagoras explained in it the opinion of Orpheus, who ſaid, that "the eſſence of number was the principle of things, and "the root of the gods and of the demons."

ways repeated will amount to an infinity. Now, the power of ten is four; for before we come to a complete and perfect decad, we diſcover all the virtue and all the perfection of the ten in the four. For example; in aſſembling all the numbers from one to four incluſively, the whole compoſition makes ten; ſince one, two, three, and four are ten; and four is an arithmetical middle between one and ſeven; for it exceeds the number one as much as it is exceeded by the number ſeven; and this number is three; four being as many more than one, as ſeven is more than four.

1
2
3
4
10

Now, the powers and properties of the unit, and of the ſeptenary, are very great and excellent: for the unit, as the principle of all the numbers, contains in itſelf the powers of them all; and the ſeven being a virgin, and without any mother, holds, in the ſecond place, the virtue and the perfection of the unit, becauſe it is not ingendered by any number within the interval of ten, as four is produced by twice two, ſix by twice three, and eight by twice four, nine by three times three, and ten by twice five: neither does it produce any number within that interval, as the number two produces four, the three nine, and the five ten. And the four

holding the middle place between the uncreated unit and the motherleſs ſeven, has alone received the virtues and powers of the numbers producing and produced, which are contained in the decad; being produced by a certain number, and producing likewiſe another; for two being doubled begets four, and four being doubled begets eight.

Add to this, that the firſt ſolid body is found in the quaternion; for a point anſwers to an unit, and a line to a binary; becauſe indeed from one point we go to another point, and this makes the line: and the ſuperficies anſwers to the ternary; for a triangle is the moſt plain of all rectilineal figures: but ſolidity is the nature of the quaternion; for it is in the four that we diſcover the firſt pyramid, whoſe triangular baſis is compoſed by the three, and its point or top is made by the unit.

Moreover, there are four faculties that judge of things; underſtanding, knowlege, opinion, and ſenſe; for all things fall under the judgment of one of theſe four faculties. In a word, the quaternion contains and binds together all beings whatſoever, the elements, numbers, ſeaſons, ages, ſocieties, or communities; and it is impoſſible to name any one ſingle thing, that depends not on that

number, as on its root and principle: for, as we ſaid before, the quaternion is the Creator and the cauſe of all things. The intelligible God is the cauſe of the heavenly and ſenſible Gods. The knowlege of theſe things was tranſmitted to the Pythagoreans by Pythagoras himſelf, by whom the author of theſe verſes ſwears in this place, that the perfection of virtue will lead us to the light of truth; ſo that we may ſafely ſay, that this precept, "Reſpect the oath," is particularly obſerved in regard to the eternal gods, who are always the ſame, and that in this place the poet ſwears by him who taught us the quaternary number, who indeed was not one of theſe gods, nor of the heroes who are ſuch by nature, but only a man adorned with the likeneſs of God, and who preſerved in the minds of his diſciples all the majeſty of that divine image. For this reaſon our author, in affairs of ſo great moment, ſwears by him, thereby tacitely to inſinuate the great veneration his diſciples had for him, and the vaſt reſpect and eſteem which this philoſopher had acquired, on account of the doctrine he taught.

The chief of his precepts was the knowlege of the quaternion that created all things: but ſeeing the firſt part of this verſe has been

briefly explained, and the latter part of it conſiſting of a firm and ſolemn promiſe, that the ſacred name of the quaternion is known by a hope that cannot deceive us; and ſeeing beſides, that this divine quaternion has been explained, as fully as the bounds which we preſcribed to ourſelves would allow, let us proceed to the other things to which theſe verſes lead us; but let us, in the firſt place, ſhew with what ardour, and with what preparation we ought to apply ourſelves thereto, and what need we have to be therein aſſiſted and ſuccoured by the ſuperior beings.

VERSES XLVIII. XLIX.

But never begin to ſet your hand to the work,—Until you have firſt prayed the Gods to accompliſh what you are going to begin.

THESE verſes comprize, in a few words, the two things that abſolutely muſt concur to make us obtain the true good: theſe are the voluntary motion of our ſoul, and the aſſiſtance of heaven; for though the choice of good be free, and depend on us, ſeeing nevertheleſs that we hold this liberty

and this power from God, we have continual need of the aſſiſtance of God, to co-operate with us, and to accompliſh what we aſk of him: for our own endeavours are properly like an open hand, ſtretched out to receive good things; and what he contributes on his part is like the magazine or ſource of the gifts which he beſtows upon us. Our part is to ſeek after that which is good, and it is the part of God to ſhow it to them who ſeek after it as they ought: and prayer is a medium between our ſeeking, and the gift of God; it is addreſſed to the cauſe that has produced us, and which, as it gave us our being, can alone perfect it.

Now, how can man receive any good unleſs God beſtows it? And how ſhall God, who can alone give it, firſt beſtow it on him, who being the maſter of his own deſires, diſdains even to aſk for it? To the end therefore that on the one hand we may not pray in words only, but confirm our prayers by our actions, and that on the other hand we may not entirely truſt in our actions, but implore the aſſiſtance of God on them, and thus join our prayers and actions together, as form to matter; the philoſopher, to incline us to pray for what we do, and to do what we pray for, joins theſe two together, and ſays

" But never begin to ſet your hand to the " work, till you have firſt prayed the gods " to accompliſh what you are about to begin."

And indeed, we neither ought to undertake good actions, as if the ſucceſs depended on us, without the aſſiſtance of God, nor content ourſelves with the bare words of prayer, without uſing, on our part, the leaſt endeavour to obtain what we aſk: for in ſo doing, either we ſhall embrace only a virtue that is impious, and without God, if it be permitted to uſe that expreſſion, or we ſhall utter prayers that will be void of works: now the impiety of the firſt will intirely ruin the very eſſence of virtue; and the inaction of the laſt will abſolutely deſtroy the efficacy of our prayers. For, how can that be good which is not done according to the law of God? And how can that which is done according to that law, not ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of the ſame God, to make it exiſt and to bring it to perfection. For virtue is the image of God in the reaſonable ſoul. Now, every image has need of the original that it may ſubſiſt; but it is in vain for us to poſſeſs this image, if we keep not our eyes continually fixt on this original, whoſe likeneſs alone is the cauſe of all that is good and excellent.

If therefore we would acquire active virtue, we muſt pray, but then our prayers muſt be accompanied with actions; and this is that which makes us always look up to the Divinity, and to the light that ſurrounds it; and that excites us to the ſtudy of philoſophy, by being always employed in the acts of virtue, and by addreſſing our prayers without ceaſing to the firſt Cauſe of all good. For "the ſource of nature, whoſe courſe is eternal," the holy quaternion, is the firſt cauſe, not only of the being of all things, but of their well-being likewiſe, having ſown and diffuſed through all the univerſe the good that is innate and natural to it, as an incorruptible and intelligent Light. The ſoul that adheres to this cauſe, and that has purified herſelf like an eye, to make her ſight the more clear and more piercing, is ſtirred up to prayer by her application to good works; and by the plenitude of good that reſults from prayer, ſhe increaſes her fervency, joining good actions to pious words, and confirming and ſtrengthning thoſe good actions by this divine intercourſe. Thus partly diſcovering of herſelf, and partly inlightened from above, ſhe does what ſhe prays for, and prays for what ſhe does. And this is the ſo neceſſary union of prayer and of

works. —— But what are the advantages we gain by theſe two means joined together, is the ſubject of what follows.

VERSES XLIX. L. LI.

When you have made this habitude familiar to yourſelf, — You will then know the conſtitution of the immortal Gods and of men, —Even how far the different beings extend, and what contains and binds them together.

THE firſt thing the author promiſes to ſuch as practiſe the foregoing precepts, is the knowlege of God, the ſcience of theology, and to be able to diſtinguiſh aright between all the beings that flow from this ſacred quaternion, with their difference according to their kinds, and their union in order to the conſtitution of this univerſe; for their order and their rank are, in this place, expreſſed by this word CONSTITUTION. "How far they extend themſelves," expreſſes their ſpecific difference, and "what con-

" tains and binds them together," marks their generical community. For the ſeveral kinds of rational ſubſtances, though they are divided by their nature, re-unite themſelves by the ſame interval that divides them: and ſome of them being firſt, others in the middle, and others laſt, is what, at the ſame time, ſeparates and unites them; for by this means, neither can the firſt be middle or laſt, nor the middle firſt or laſt, nor the laſt middle or firſt; but they remain eternally diſtinguiſhed and divided according to their genus, by the bounds which their Creator has preſcribed them: and thus we underſtand theſe words, " how far the different " beings extend themſelves;" and that we may underſtand likewiſe the words that follow, " and what contains and binds them " together," let us examine them as follows.

This univerſe would not be perfect if it contained not in itſelf the firſt, the middle, and the laſt parts of it, as the beginning, the middle, and the end of all this ſyſtem, of all this compoſition: nor would the firſt parts of it be the firſt, if they were not attended by the middle and by the laſt; nor would the middle parts be the middle, if they had not on either hand of them the two extremes; nor laſtly, would the laſt parts be

what they are, if they were not preceded by the firſt and by the middle.

All theſe different beings conſpire together to the perfection of the whole fabric, and this is what is here meant by theſe words, " and " what contains them, and binds them " to one another." Inaſmuch as they differ in their kinds, they are ſeparate from one another; but as they are members of one and the ſame whole, they rejoin and re-unite themſelves: and by this ſeparation and this union together, they complete and perfect the whole conſtitution and order of this divine work; a conſtitution which you will perfectly know, if you get a habitude of the good things of which he has already ſpoken. We cannot mention the two extremes, but the middle will immediately preſent itſelf to the mind; therefore he thought it enough to ſay, " the conſtitution of the immortal " gods and men." For the firſt beings are linked to the laſt by the middle beings; and the laſt re-aſcend to the firſt by the mediation and interpoſition of the illuſtrious heroes. For this is the number and the order of intelligent beings, as we ſaid in the beginning of this work; where we ſhewed that the firſt in this univerſe are the immortal gods, after them the illuſtrious heroes, and laſt of all the

terreſtrial demons, whom he here calls mortal men.

Now, how to know each of theſe kinds has been already ſhewn in the beginning of this diſcourſe; to wit, by having a ſcientifical knowlege of all theſe beings, which tradition has taught us to honour: and this knowlege is formed only in ſuch as have adorned practical virtue with contemplative, or whom the goodneſs of their nature has exalted from human to divine virtue: for thus to know the beings as they were eſtabliſhed and conſtituted by God himſelf, is to raiſe ourſelves up to the divine likeneſs. But as next to the diſpoſition and order of immaterial beings, ſucceeds the corporeal nature, which fills this viſible world, and is ſubmitted to the conduct of thoſe rational eſſences, he ſhews, in the next place, that the advantage of natural philoſophy will be the effect of having learned all theſe things with order, and in the method before-mentioned.

VERSES LII. LIII.

You ſhall likewiſe know, according to juſtice, that the nature of this univerſe is in all things alike: — So that you ſhall not hope what you ought not to hope; and nothing in this world ſhall be hid from you.

NATURE, in forming this univerſe after the divine meaſure and proportion, made it in all things conformable and like to itſelf, in different manners by analogy; and of all the different ſpecies, diffuſed throughout the whole, it made, as it were, an image of the divine beauty, imparting variouſly to the copy the perfections of the original; for to the heavens it gave perpetual motion, and to the earth ſtability. Theſe two qualities are ſo many ſtrokes or touches of the divine reſemblance. He appointed the celeſtial body to ſurround the univerſe, and the terreſtrial body to ſerve for centre to the celeſtial.

Now, in a ſphere the centre and the circumference may be regarded in different re-

ſpects, as its beginning and as its principle. Hence it is, that the circumference is diverſified with an infinity of ſtars and of intelligent beings; and that the earth is adorned with plants and with animals, who are indued only with ſenſe: between theſe two ſorts of beings, ſo different from each other, man holds the middle ſpace, as an amphibious animal, being the laſt of the ſuperior beings, and the firſt of the inferior: this is the reaſon why he ſometimes unites himſelf to the immortal beings, and by his return to underſtanding and to virtue, recovers his natural ſtate; and ſometimes he replunges himſelf among the mortal, and by tranſgreſſing the divine laws, forfeits and falls off from his dignity. And indeed being the laſt of rational beings, he cannot think and know always alike; for if he could, he would not be man, but God by nature; — nor yet contemplate always, for that would place him in the rank of angels: whereas he is only man, who, by reſemblance, may raiſe himſelf up to what is moſt good and excellent; though, by nature, he is placed in a rank inferior to the immortal gods, and to the illuſtrious heroes; that is, to the two kinds that hold the firſt and ſecond rank. He is inferior to theſe as he does not always know and contemplate,

but is ſometimes in a total ignorance and forgetfulneſs of his own eſſence, and of the light that deſcends from God upon him; but is ſuperior to the brute animals, and vegetables; and he ſurpaſſes, by his eſſence, all the terreſtrial and mortal nature, inaſmuch as he is himſelf naturally capable to return towards his God, to efface his forgetfulneſs by reminiſcency, to recover, by inſtruction, what he has loſt, and to repair his flight from things above, by a quite contrary tendency.

This being therefore the nature of man, it becomes him to know the conſtitution of the immortal gods, and of mortal men; that is to ſay, the order and the rank of rational beings; to know that the nature of this univerſe is in all reſpects alike; that is, that the whole corporeal ſubſtance, from the higheſt to the loweſt, is honoured with an analogical likeneſs of God; and laſtly, to know all theſe things "according to juſtice;" that is, as they are eſtabliſhed by the law, as God created them, and in what manner, the incorporeal as well as the corporeal, are diſpoſed and placed by his laws. For this precept that commands us "to know them accord-
"ing to juſtice," ought to be underſtood of the one and the other of theſe two works of God.

Nor may we, through a blind and indiſcreet zeal, preſume, as we pleaſe, to attribute the dignity due to one being to another; but obſerving the limits of truth, we ought "to "know them all according to juſtice," and as the law of their creation has fixed and diſtinguiſhed them. And from this twofold knowlege, I mean the knowlege of the incorporeal work of God, and the knowlege of the corporeal and viſible, we gain this unſpeakable advantage, "Not to hope what is "not to be hoped, and to have nothing in "this world hidden from us." For the reaſon why "we hope what is not to be hoped," and project impoſſibilities, is becauſe we are ignorant of the nature of things. As if a man ſhould hope to become one of the immortal gods, or of the illuſtrious heroes, he muſt be wholly ignorant of the bounds of nature, and makes no difference between the firſt, ſecond, and laſt beings. But again, if through a ſhameful ignorance of the immortality annexed to our ſoul, a man ſhould perſuade himſelf that his ſoul dies with his body, he expects what he ought not to expect, and what can never happen; in like manner, he who expects, that after his death he ſhall put on the body of a beaſt, and become an animal without reaſon, becauſe of his vices, or a

plant, becauſe of his dulneſs and ſtupidity; ſuch a man, I ſay, acting quite contrary to thoſe who transform the eſſence of man into one of the ſuperior beings, and precipitating it into one of the inferior ſubſtances, is infinitely deceived, and abſolutely ignorant of the eſſential form of our ſoul, which can never change; for being and continuing always man, it is only ſaid to become God or beaſt by virtue or vice, though by its nature it cannot be either the one or the other, but only by its reſemblance to the one or the other. In a word, he that knows not the dignity of each being, but exceeds it or comes ſhort of it, makes of his ignorance a foundation of vain hopes and opinions, or of cauſeleſs fears; whereas every man who diſtinguiſhes the beings according to the limits which their Creator has preſcribed them, who knows them in the manner in which they were created, who meaſures God, if I may be allowed to uſe the expreſſion, by the knowlege of himſelf; ſuch a man, I ſay, exactly obſerves the precept that injoins to follow God, knows the moſt excellent meaſure, and puts himſelf in a condition never to be deceived or ſurprized.

VERSES

LIV. LV. LVI. LVII. LVIII. LIX. LX.

You will likewiſe know, that men draw upon themſelves their own misfortunes voluntarily, and of their own free choice.—Wretches as they are! they neither ſee, nor underſtand, that their good is near them. — There are very few of them who know how to deliver themſelves out of their misfortunes. — Such is the fate that blinds mankind, and takes away their ſenſes. Like huge cylinders, — They roll to and fro, always oppreſſed with ills without number. — For fatal contention, that is innate in them, and that purſues them every where, toſſes them up and down, nor do they perceive it —Inſtead of pro-

voking and ſtirring it up, they ought by yielding to avoid it.

THE order of the corporeal and incorporeal eſſences being well underſtood, we muſt neceſſarily comprehend the eſſence of man, and know what it is, to what paſſions it is ſubject, and that it holds the middle rank between the beings that never fall into vice, and the beings that can never raiſe themſelves up to virtue. Hence it is, that it has the two tendencies which theſe two affinities naturally inſpire; and lives ſometimes an intellectual life, and ſometimes embraces affections that are wholly ſenſual; which made Heraclitus ſay, with great reaſon, that our life is death, and our death life: for man falls and precipitates himſelf from the manſions of the bleſt, as Empedocles the Pythagorean ſays,

——— Baniſh'd the bliſsful bow'rs,
Forlorn he wanders, by dire diſcord toſs'd,
And in impetuous ſtorms of raging ſtrife is loſt.

But he re-aſcends and recovers his primitive habitude, if he ſcorn the things here below, and deteſt this diſmal abode, where, as the ſame poet ſays, there inhabit

Murder and rage and thouſand ſwarms of woes.

And in which, they who fall,

Wander bewilder'd, helpleſs of relief,
In the dark plains of injury and grief.

He who ſhuns theſe diſmal plains of darkneſs, is led by an innate deſire into the meadow of truth; and if he forſakes it, his wings flag and fail him, and down he drops headlong into an earthly body,

——— Where in large draughts,
He quaffs th' oblivion of his happineſs.

And herewith agrees the opinion of Plato, who, ſpeaking of this fall of the ſoul, ſays, "But when having no longer a ſtrength ſufficient to follow God, ſhe beholds not this field of truth; and being by ſome misfortune filled with vice and with forgetfulneſs, ſhe grows dull and heavy; and thus ſtupified, ſhe comes to loſe her wings, and to fall down upon the earth, then the law ſends her to animate a mortal body." And concerning the return of the ſoul to the place from whence ſhe deſcended, he ſays, "The man, who by his reaſon has overcome the tumult and wild diſorder that are occaſioned in him by the mixture of earth, water, air, and fire, retakes his primitive form, and recovers his original habitude, he ſhall return ſound and whole to the

" ſtar that had been aſſigned him." He returns ſound, becauſe he is freed from the paſſions, which are as ſo many diſeaſes; and this cure cannot be performed in him, except by the means of practical virtue; and he returns whole, becauſe he recovers underſtanding and knowlege, as eſſential and proper parts of him, which cannot happen to him but by the means of contemplative virtue.

Moreover, Plato expreſly teaches, that by our averſion for the things below, we can alone heal and correct the apoſtacy that makes us go aſtray from God; and he aſſerts this avoiding of evils here below to be only philoſophy, thereby inſinuating, that men only are obnoxious to theſe ſorts of paſſions; and that it is not poſſible that evils ſhould be baniſhed from the earth, or that they can approach the Deity; but that they hover always about the earth we dwell in, and adhere to mortal nature, as being the effects of unavoidable neceſſity. For the beings that are ſubject to generation and to corruption may be affected and have deſires contrary to nature; and this is the principle of all evils: and to teach us how we ought to avoid them, he adds, " Therefore we " ought to fly from hence with all diligence;

" now to fly from hence is to endeavour to " reſemble God, as much as man is capable " of ſuch a likeneſs; and to reſemble God is " to become juſt and holy with prudence:" For he who would avoid theſe evils, ought to begin by diveſting himſelf of this mortal nature, it being impoſſible that they, who are engaged in it, ſhould not be plunged in all the evils that neceſſity produce therein.

In like manner therefore, as our ſwerving and abſence from God, and the loſs of the wings that raiſed us up towards the things that are above, have precipitated us into this region of death, the abode of all evils; ſo the diveſting ourſelves of all worldly affections, and the renovation of virtue, like the new growth of our wings to guide us to the manſions of life, where true good is to be found without the leaſt allay of evil, will bring us back to divine happineſs: for the eſſence of man holding the middle place between the beings that always contemplate God, and thoſe that are incapable of contemplating him, may raiſe up itſelf towards the one, or debaſe and ſink itſelf down towards the other, having, by reaſon of its nature, an equal propenſity to take the divine or brutal reſemblance, accordingly as it receives or rejects the ſovereign intelligence.

He therefore that knows this liberty and this double power in human nature, knows likewiſe how men voluntarily draw on themſelves their own evils, and how they become wretched and miſerable by their own election; for though they could have remained in their true country, they ſuffer themſelves to be dragged to birth by the inordinateneſs of their deſires; and when they might readily free themſelves from this miſerable body, they voluntarily immerſe themſelves into all the confuſions and diſorders of the paſſions. And this is what he would have us underſtand, when he ſays, "They neither ſee nor "underſtand that their good is near them."

This good is VIRTUE and TRUTH; and—"not to ſee that they are near them," is not to be inclined of themſelves to ſearch after them; and "—not to hear or underſtand that "they are near them," is not to harken to the admonitions, and not to obey the precepts that others give them: for there are two ways of receiving knowlege; one by inſtruction, as by the hearing; the other by ſearch, as by the ſight. Men are therefore ſaid to draw evils upon themſelves of their own accord, when they will neither learn from others, nor find out of themſelves, remaining deſtitute of the ſenſe of all good,

and conſequently thereby intirely uſeleſs and unprofitable; for every man who ſees not of himſelf, and harkens not to the inſtructions of others, is intirely uſeleſs, and in a deſperate condition; but they who endeavour to find of themſelves, or to learn from others, the things that are truly good, are thoſe of whom he ſays, "that they know "how to deliver themſelves from their evils;" and who by avoiding the troubles and labours of this world, tranſport themſelves into the pure and free æther. The number of theſe is very ſmall; for far the greateſt part of men are wicked ſlaves to their paſſion, and in a manner run mad, through the violence of their propenſity, to the things of this world; and this evil they bring upon themſelves, by having wilfully departed from God, and deprived themſelves of his preſence, and, if I may dare to ſay ſo, of the familiarity with which they had the happineſs to enjoy, while they inhabited the manſions of pure and unclouded light. Now, the fate that blinds mankind, and takes away their ſenſes, is a mark of their departure from God.

And indeed, it is equally impoſſible, that a man who is without God ſhould not be mad, as it is that a madman, ſhould not be without God: for it is of neceſſity that a

fool is without God, and that he who is without God is a fool: and both the one and the other of them, not being inclined to love the things that "are truly good, are oppreſ-"ed with evils without number," hurried from one misfortune into another, like huge rolling-ſtones, by the weight of their impious actions; not knowing what to do, nor what will become of them, becauſe they govern themſelves without reaſon and without reflection in all the viciſſitudes of fortune; inſolent in riches, treacherous in poverty, robbers if ſtrong of body, and blaſphemers if ſickly and weak; they lament and repine if they have no children, and if they have, they take from thence pretences of wars, of ſuits in law, and of unjuſt and diſhoneſt gains. To ſay all in a word, there is nothing in this life, that does not incline imprudent men to evil, who are preſſed and ſtraitened on all hands, by the vices which they have voluntarily embraced, and by their refuſal to ſee the divine light, and to give ear to what they are told concerning the things that are truly good; and being ſwallowed up in the abyſs of carnal deſires, they ſuffer themſelves to be toſſed up and down in this life, as by a violent tempeſt.

Now, the only way to be delivered from

all theſe evils is to return to God; and this return they only enjoy, who have the eyes and ears of their ſoul always open and attentive to the recovery of the things that are truly good; and who, by the faculty which they have of raiſing themſelves up to God, have healed the evil that is inherent in our nature.—Now, this evil inherent in our nature, and which, at the ſame time, is an acquired evil, is the abuſe we make of our free-will; for under pretext of uſing this freedom, we endeavour always to argue againſt the decrees of God, and madly to run counter to his laws, not regarding the great evils we bring upon ourſelves, by this vain and impious opinion of believing ourſelves able to oppoſe God, but being able only dimly and obſcurely to diſcover that we can ſhake off the yoke of the divine law; and herein the will plays the libertine, and abuſes its freedom in daring to depart from God, and to enter into a fatal contention with him, obſtinately diſputing againſt him, and refuſing to yield to him. If he ſays to us, "Thou ſhalt not do this," we are ſure to do it; and if he ſays, "Do "this," that is the thing we will not do. Thus we heap up the meaſure of our iniquities, and precipitate ourſelves on either hand into infinite miſeries by this twofold tranſ-

greſſion of the law of God, in not doing what it commands, and in doing what it forbids.

What remedy then ſhall we find againſt this fatal contention, which is here ſaid " to " be our companion, and to be born with " us;" to this contention which proceeds from our ill inclinations, that are always oppoſite to nature; and which, for that reaſon, like a boſom evil, wounds and deſtroys us unawares, what ſhall we oppoſe againſt it? How check and put a ſtop to its rage? Certainly there is no other mound to fence out this faculty, that precipitates and ſinks us thus low, than to practiſe, to meditate, and to love all the precepts, " which will put us " into the ways of divine virtues; for they " are the remedies which, though known " but to a few, will deliver us from all our " evils, and make us ſee and underſtand the " goods that are near us." It is they that deliver us from the misfortunes that we draw voluntarily on ourſelves, and from the multitude of troubles and paſſions that oppreſs us; and by conſequence they are the only way to avoid this impious life: it is they that are the health of the ſoul, the purgation of this raging contention, and our return to God: for the only way to cure the inclination that ſinks us down by the faculty that raiſes us up, is not

to augment that inclination, nor add evils to evils, but to become obedient, and ſubject ourſelves to ſound reaſon, and avoid this pernicious contention, by embracing a contention that is wholly good; that is to ſay, in ſtriving no longer to diſobey God, but in labouring to obey him with all our ſtrength. And this good ſtrife ought not to be called CONTENTION, but a RESIGNATION to the will of God, a returning to his divine law, and a voluntary and perfect ſubmiſſion, that cuts off all pretence to fooliſh diſobedience and incredulity; for I apprehend that all theſe things are contained in the verſes now before us.

For, to ſhew that men embrace vice of their own accord, he ſays, "You ſhall know "that men voluntarily draw on themſelves "their own evils;" they may therefore be reaſonably called WICKED and MISERABLE, ſeeing they precipitate themſelves into vice through the choice of their own will. To ſhew, that they are obſtinately deaf to the good precepts that are given them, he ſays, that "they neither ſee nor hear the good "that is near them." And to ſhew that it is poſſible to deliver themſelves from thoſe evils, into which they wilfully throw themſelves, he adds this reflection, "There are

" very few who know how to deliver them-
" ſelves from their misfortunes ;" thereby giving us to underſtand, that ſince this deliverance from evil is the effect of our will, the ſlavery of vice is conſequently the effect of it likewiſe. After this he adds the cauſe of the blindneſs and the deafneſs of the ſouls, who voluntarily precipitate themſelves into vice ; " Such is the fate, ſays he, that blinds
" mankind, and takes away their underſtand-
" ing:" for our ſwerving and departure from God neceſſarily throw us into folly, and into a raſhneſs of choice without reflection. And this apoſtacy is what he here means by the word FATE, that baniſhes us from the choir of divine ſpirits, by giving us a propenſity to this corruptible and mortal life. He ſhews us beſides the conſequences of this raſh and inconſiderate choice ; and teaches us how our offences are at the ſame time voluntary and involuntary ; by comparing the life of an imprudent man to a rolling-ſtone, which moves at the ſame time in a round and direct motion ; in a round, of itſelf; and in a direct, by its falling downwards. For as a cylinder is not capable of circular motion around its axis, if it be crooked, and no longer in a ſtrait line ; ſo the ſoul no longer preſerves the things that are truly

good, when it once deviates from ſound reaſon, and departs from its union with God; but it wanders in ſearch of ſeeming goods, deviates from what is right, being toſſed to and fro by carnal affections; which he explains by theſe words, "They roll here and "there, always oppreſſed with ills without "number."

And as the cauſe of this Fate that takes from men their underſtanding, and ſeparates them from God, is the abuſe they make of their freedom, he teaches in the two following verſes how to reform this abuſe, and how to make uſe of the ſame freedom to return to God: for to inſinuate to us, that we draw on ourſelves our own evils only becauſe we will have it ſo, he ſays, "The fatal conten-"tion that is innate in them, purſues them "wherever they are, and toſſes them to and "fro, unperceived by them." And immediately after, to ſhew that the remedy is in our own hands, he adds, "Inſtead of pro-"voking and ſtirring it up, they ought by "yielding to avoid it." But perceiving at the ſame time that we have, above all things, need of the aſſiſtance of God, to enable us to depart from evil, and to embrace good, he concludes with a prayer; and makes an ejaculation to God, the ſole means to procure his aſſiſtance.

VERSES

LXI.LXII.LXIII.LXIV.LXV.LXVI.

Great Jupiter! father of men! either deliver us from all the evils that oppreſs us, — Or diſcover to us all what demon we uſe.

But take courage; the race of man is divine.— Sacred nature reveals to them the moſt hidden myſteries. — If ſhe impart to you her ſecrets, you will eaſily perform all the things which I have ordained;—And healing your ſoul, you will deliver it from all theſe evils.

IT was the cuſtom of the Pythagoreans to call God, the Father and Creator of the univerſe, by the name of JUPITER, which in the original tongue, is taken from a word that ſignifies LIFE. For he who gave life and being to all things, ought to be called by a

name derived from his power. And the truly proper name for God, is that which is moſt ſuitable to his omnipotence and works. At this day among us we may much rather ſay, that chance, and the common agreement of mankind, have produced the names that ſeem to us moſt proper, than that the propriety of their nature gave occaſion to their invention; for this is evident from a world of names that are given to things, contrary to the very nature of them, and with which they agree no more than if we ſhould call a wicked man good, or an impious man pious. For theſe ſorts of names have not the conformity and ſuitableneſs that names ought to have, as they denote not, either the being or the qualities of the thing to which they are impoſed. But this agreement and this propriety of names ought moſt of all to be ſought after in the things that are eternal; and among the eternal, in the things divine; and among the divine, in the moſt excellent.

Thus you ſee why the name of Jupiter carries even in the every ſound, a ſymbol and an image of the eſſence that created all things. For the firſt impoſers of names, like excellent ſtatuaries, by their ſublime knowlege and wiſdom, expreſſed by the names themſelves, as by animated images, the vir-

tues and qualities of thoſe to whom they gave them: for they invented names, whoſe very ſound was the ſymbol of their thoughts; and their thoughts were moſt inſtructive images of the ſubjects on which they thought.

And indeed theſe great ſouls, by their continual application to intelligible things, being, as it were, ſwallowed up in contemplation, and grown, as I may ſay, pregnant with this commerce, when they were taken with the pangs of bringing forth their thoughts, cried out in expreſſions, and gave ſuch names to things, as by their very ſound, and by the letters imployed in forming them, perfectly expreſſed the kinds of the things named, and led to the knowlege of their nature, all that comprehended them aright; ſo that the end of their contemplation has been in regard to us the beginning of knowlege.—Thus the Creator of all things was called by theſe men of deep knowlege and wiſdom, ſometimes by the name of FOUR, and ſometimes by the name of JUPITER; for the reaſons which we have already mentioned.

Now, what we aſk of him in this prayer, is what he beſtows on all men by reaſon of his infinite goodneſs; but it depends on us to receive what he is continually giving. It was ſaid before, "Begin not to put your

" hand to work, till firſt you have ad-
" dreſſed Heaven in prayer;" implying, that God is always ready to give us the things that are good, but that we receive them only when we aſk for them, and when we ſtretch out our hands to the divine diſtribution: for what is free, receives not what is truly good, unleſs it will; and the true goods are truth and virtue, which flowing without ceaſing from the eſſence of the Creator, are viſible at all times, and in the ſame manner to the eyes of all men. And when theſe verſes pray that we may be delivered from all our evils, they aſk, as a thing abſolutely neceſſary, that we may know our own eſſence; for this is what is meant by this expreſſion, " what is the demon whom they uſe;" that is to ſay, " what is their ſoul." For, from this return to ourſelves, from this knowlege of ourſelves, will neceſſarily reſult the deliverance from our evils, and a diſcovery of thoſe things which God holds forth to us as means whereby we may obtain happineſs. This verſe therefore ſuppoſes, that if all men knew what they are, and " what is the de-
" mon whom they uſe," they would all be delivered from their evils: but this is impoſſible; for it cannot be that they ſhould all apply themſelves to philoſophy, or that they

ſhould receive all alike, all the good things that God inceſſantly offers for the perfection of happineſs.

What then remains but for them only to take courage, who apply themſelves to the knowlege that alone diſcovers our true good, the good that is proper for us; for they only will be delivered from the evils that are inherent in this mortal nature, becauſe it is they alone who addict themſelves to the contemplation of the things that are truly good: and therefore they deſerve to be placed among the number of the divine beings, becauſe they are inſtructed by ſacred nature, that is, by philoſophy, and becauſe they practiſe all the precepts which their duty obliges them to obſerve.

Now, if we have any converſation with theſe divine men, we ſhall make it be ſeen, by applying ourſelves wholly to virtuous actions, and to the intellectual ſciences, by which alone the ſoul is healed of its paſſions, and delivered from all the evils here below, being tranſlated into an order, and into a condition wholly divine.

In ſhort, this is the ſenſe of theſe verſes. They who know themſelves are freed from all mortal affections.—But why are not all men then free from them, ſeeing they have with-

in them an innate power of knowing what their own eſſence is? Becauſe the greateſt part of them, as has been already ſaid, voluntarily draw upon themſelves their own misfortunes, by refuſing to ſee or hear, that good is near them. But ſmall is the number of thoſe, who know how to deliver themſelves from their evils, becauſe they know "what demon they uſe." And theſe are they who, by the help of philoſophy, have freed themſelves from all brutiſh paſſions, and who are retired from theſe earthly abodes, as from a narrow confinement, where they had been ſlaves to their paſſions.

Why then does the philoſopher ſay to Jupiter, "Father of men! either deliver us "from all the evils that oppreſs us, or diſ-"cover to us what demon we uſe?" Would he have us believe that it depends on God to bring all men back to truth, even in ſpite of themſelves, and that he refuſes to do it, either through neglect or deſignedly, that they may continue in eternal ſlavery? This cannot be ſo much as heard without impiety. He rather intends thereby to teach us, that whoever would attain to happineſs, ought to have recourſe to God, as to his father: for God is the Creator of all beings, and the father of the good. He therefore

who knows wherein conſiſts the deliverance from evils, who has actually delivered himſelf from ſuch as men of their own accord draw upon themſelves, and who, by a voluntary flight, avoids fatal contention; he, I ſay, imploring the divine aſſiſtance, cries out, "O Jupiter, father of men!" He has already performed the part of a ſon in calling God father, and he makes this reflection, that if what he does of himſelf, all men did like him, they would like him too be delivered from all their evils: but finding afterwards that this does happen, not through any fault of God, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, but through the fault of men, who voluntarily draw on themſelves their own misfortunes, he ſays to himſelf, "But take cou-" rage," thou who haſt found out the true way to deliver thyſelf from thy miſeries: and this way is the return which ſacred philoſophy inſpires us to make to the good things that God never ceaſes to offer us, and which the greateſt part of men do not ſee; becauſe they do not rightly improve thoſe common notions which our maker has imprinted on rational beings, as a mark to lead us to the knowlege of himſelf.

Now, to ſhew any thing to a man, it is neceſſary that the actions of two perſons

ſhould concur: for, how can you ſhew any thing to a blind man, though you ſhould preſent to him a thouſand times what you have a mind to ſhew him? Or, how can you ſhew a thing to a man who has his eye-ſight, unleſs you offer him what you would have him ſee? Theſe two things therefore are neceſſary: on the part of him that ſhews, there muſt be ſomething preſented; and on the part of him to whom any thing is ſhewn, there muſt be eyes capable of ſeeing, to the end that on the one hand the object, and on the other the ſight, may concur together, and that nothing may be wanting to make up a perfect manifeſtation.

This being premiſed, let us make this ſuppoſition that all men would be delivered from their evils, if God, who created them, did ſhew and teach them to know themſelves, and to know "what is the demon they uſe;" but we ſee nevertheleſs, that all men are not freed from their evils. God therefore does not ſhew to all men alike, but to them only who concur on their part to this deliverance, and who are deſirous to open their eyes, that they may ſee, contemplate, and receive what God is pleaſed to ſhew them: and by conſequence God is not the cauſe that he does not ſhew to all men, but they are themſelves the

cauſe of it, who neither ſee nor hear that good things are near them.

Thus you ſee why we ſay they draw on themſelves their own evils of their own accord. The fault is in him that chuſes, and God is in no wiſe to blame, ſeeing he continually expoſes the things that are good to the eyes of all men; but ſhews them not always to all, becauſe in the greateſt part of them, the eyes of the ſoul, which are alone capable of ſeeing the good that is continually offered it, are cloſed or fixed downwards on the earth, through an ill habitude which they have contracted of adhering always to what is evil. This explication of theſe verſes is conformable to truth, and confirms the ſenſe of the foregoing verſes.

And indeed, if it depend on God to drag all men to truth, whether they will or no, why do we accuſe them of drawing on themſelves their own misfortunes voluntarily, and through their own fault? Why do we adviſe them not to provoke contention, but to avoid it by yielding? Why do we command them to bear in patience the accidents that happen to them, and to uſe their efforts to amend and heal them? For all the ways to virtue by inſtructions are intirely ſhut up, if liberty of will be once taken away. We

need neither practiſe nor meditate, nor love good, if it were the part of God only to deliver us from vice, and to repleniſh us with virtue, without our contributing thereto.

But if this were ſo, God would be the cauſe of the ſins of men: now, if God be no wiſe the author of evil, as we have already demonſtrated, it is evident, that our apoſtacy from good comes wholly from ourſelves, who neither ſee nor hear that it is near us, and in us, agreeable to the innate notions that nature imparted to us at our creation; and the ſole cauſe of this blindneſs, and of this deafneſs, is this pernicious contention, this evil that we voluntarily embrace; but inſtead of increaſing and ſuffering it to grow, we ought to avoid it by yielding, to learn to deliver ourſelves from our evils, and to find out the way to return to God: a conſequence of this will be calmneſs of mind, a deliverance from the evils of life, a lively taſte of divine goods, and a participation of a heavenly converſation.

The philoſopher having thus treated of truth and of virtue, and having cloſed up the precepts of virtue in the nightly examen of our conſciences, which he adviſes us to make, and having beſides carried on the hopes of truth as far as the liberty of the ſoul, and its deliverance out of all its evils, he pro-

ceeds, in the next place, to ſpeak of purity, which gives wings to the luminous body; and thus he adds a third kind of philoſophy to the two former.

VERSES LXVII. LXVIII. LXIX.

Abſtain from the meats which we have forbidden in the purifications,—And in the deliverance of the ſoul; make a juſt diſtinction of them, and examine all things well.—Leaving yourſelf always to be guided and directed by the underſtanding that comes from above, and that ought to hold the reins.

THE rational eſſence, having received from God its Creator a body conformable to its nature, deſcended hither upon earth, ſo that it is neither a body, nor without a body; but being incorporeal, it has nevertheleſs its form determined and bounded by the body; even as in the ſtars, whoſe ſuperior

part is an incorporeal ſubſtance, and their inferior a corporeal; the ſun itſelf being a compound of ſomewhat corporeal and of ſomething incorporeal; not that it is compoſed of two parts, which having been ſeparate, have united themſelves together; for if ſo, they might ſeparate themſelves again; but of two parts created together, and born together with ſubordination, ſo that the one directs and the other obeys.—It is the ſame with all rational eſſences, as well with the heroes as with men; for a hero is a rational ſoul with a luminous body; and man is likewiſe a rational ſoul with an immortal body created with it.

Thus you ſee the doctrine of Pythagoras, which Plato in his Phædrus explained long after him, comparing the divine ſoul and the human ſoul to a winged chariot, that has two horſes and a charioteer to guide it.

For the perfection therefore of the ſoul, we have need of truth and of virtue; and for the purgation of our luminous body, we ſtand in need to be cleanſed of all the pollutions of matter, to have recourſe to ſacred purifications, and to make uſe of all the ſtrength that God has given us to ſtir us up to fly from theſe inferior abodes; and this is what the preceding verſes teach us. They

inſtruct us to remove the pollutions of matter by this precept, "Abſtain from all the "meats that we have forbidden." They enjoin us to add to this abſtinence, holy purifications, and the ſtrength with which we are divinely inſpired; which command is indeed a little obſcurely inculcated by theſe words, "in the purifications and in the deliverance "of the ſoul," &c. And laſtly, they endeavour to render the form of the human eſſence intire and perfect, by adding, "Leav-"ing yourſelf to be guided and directed by "the underſtanding that comes from above, "and that ought to hold the reins." For he thereby ſets before our eyes the whole human eſſence, and diſtinguiſhes the order and the rank of the parts that compoſe it. That which guides is as the charioteer, and that which follows and obeys, is as the chariot.

Theſe verſes therefore teach all who are deſirous to underſtand the ſymbols of Pythagoras, and to obey them, that by the exerciſe of virtue, and by embracing truth and purity, we ought to take care of our ſoul, and of our luminous body, which the oracles * call "the ſubtile chariot of the ſoul."

* By theſe oracles he means ſome verſes that were imputed to Orpheus; or elſe he gives this appellation to the tenets of Pythagoras.

Now, the purity here ſpoken of, extends to meat and drink, and to the whole management and uſage of our mortal body, in which is lodged our luminous body, which inſpires life into the inanimate body, and contains and preſerves all its harmony. For the immaterial body is the life, and produces the life of the material body; by which life our mortal body becomes perfect, being compoſed of the immaterial life, and of the material body; and being the image of the whole man, who, properly ſpeaking, is a compound of the rational eſſence, and of the immaterial body.

Seeing therefore that we are men, and that man is compoſed of theſe two parts, it is evident that we ought to be purified and perfected in both of them; and to this purpoſe he muſt follow the ways that are proper to each of his two natures; for each part requires a different purification. For example, the reaſonable ſoul, in regard to its faculty of reaſoning and judging, muſt be purified by truth, which produces knowlege; and in regard to its faculty of deliberating, it muſt be purified by conſultation; for being made to contemplate the things that are divine, and to regulate the things below; for the firſt we have need of truth, and for the laſt we

have need of virtue, that we may wholly apply ourſelves to the contemplation of the things that are eternal, and to the practice of all our duties; and in both we ſhall avoid the ſtorms that folly raiſes, if we obey exactly the divine laws that have been given us: for this folly is the thing, of which we ought to purge our rational eſſence; becauſe it was that which gave it a tendency and affection for the things here below. But becauſe a mortal body has annexed itſelf to our luminous body, we ought likewiſe to purge it of this corruptible body, and to deliver it from the ſympathies it has contracted with it. There remains therefore only the purgation of the ſpiritual body, which muſt be done according to the ſacred oracles, and to the holy method which the art teaches. This purgation is in ſome manner more corporeal, and therefore imploys all ſorts of ways intirely to heal this vivifying body, and to oblige it by this operation to ſeparate itſelf from matter, and to take its flight to thoſe bliſsful regions, where its original happineſs had placed it. Now, whatever is done for the purification of this body, if it be done in a manner worthy of God, without any deceit or impoſture, will be found conſonant to the rules of truth and of virtue. For the

purgations of the reaſonable ſoul, and of the luminous chariot, are performed to this purpoſe, that the latter may, by that means, come to have wings, and immediately ſoar aloft towards the celeſtial habitations.

Now, what moſt contributes to the growth of theſe wings, is meditation, by which we learn, by little and little, to wean our affections from earthly things, and to get a habit of contemplating the things that are immaterial and intellectual, and to ſhake off the pollutions it has contracted by its union with this terreſtrial and mortal body. And indeed, by theſe three advantages it revives in ſome manner,—rouzes up itſelf,—is filled with divine vigour,—and reunites itſelf to the perfection of the ſoul.

But it will be aſked, wherein and how the abſtaining from certain meats can contribute to things of ſuch excellence? Certainly it cannot be doubted but in regard to thoſe who are accuſtomed to avoid all worldly joys, to abſtain beſides intirely from eating meats, eſpecially from ſuch as enervate the mind, and incline the body to luſtful deſires; it cannot, I ſay, be doubted, but this will be a great help to them, and a conſiderable advance towards their purification. This is the reaſon why in the ſymbolical precepts

we are injoined these abstinences; and which, under the mystical sense, conceal one that is general and of large extent, though at the same time, literally taken, they have the sense which they present, and positively forbid what is expressly named in the precept. For example, the symbol that forbids "to "eat the matrix of any animal," literally taken, forbids the eating of a certain part of it, and that a very small one too; but if we dive to the bottom of the hidden sense of this Pythagorean mystery, we shall discover that by this plain and sensible image, we are taught to abstain intirely from all venereal debaucheries. And as we are commanded to abstain actually, and according to the latter from eating that part of any animal, so are we to practise and observe with equal care, the most mysterious and hidden injunctions of this precept, in order to the purgation of the luminous body.

In like manner, in this precept, "Thou "shalt not eat the heart," the chief sense is, that we should avoid anger; but the literal and subordinate sense is, that we should abstain from eating that forbidden part.

So too the design of the precept that commands us "to abstain from the flesh of beasts "that die of themselves," is not only to

wean us in general from this mortal nature, but to hinder us likewiſe from partaking of any profane fleſh, and of ſuch as is not fit for ſacrifices; for, in ſymbolical precepts, it is juſt to obey as well the literal as the hidden ſenſe. And the practice of the literal ſenſe is the only way to attain to the obſervance of the myſtical, which is the moſt important.

And thus we ought to underſtand this verſe, which, in two or three words, gives us the ſeeds and principles of the beſt actions; "Abſtain from meats," which is the ſame thing as if he had ſaid, "Abſtain from mor-"tal and corruptible bodies." But becauſe it is impoſſible to abſtain from all, he adds, "that we have forbidden," and he points out the places of which he ſpeaks, "in the "purifications, and in the deliverance of the "ſoul;" to the end, that by abſtaining from prohibited meats, we may increaſe the ſplendor of the corporeal chariot, and take ſuch a care of it as becomes a ſoul that is purified and delivered from all the pollutions of matter. And he leaves the true diſtinction of all theſe things to the underſtanding, which being the only faculty that judges, is likewiſe alone capable of taking ſuch care of the luminous body, as the purity of the ſoul requires.

Thus you ſee why he calls this underſtand-

ing, "the charioteer, the conductor," who holds the reins, it being created to guide the chariot. It is called UNDERSTANDING, becauſe it is the intelligent faculty, and CONDUCTOR or CHARIOTEER, becauſe it governs and guides the body. Now, the eye of love is what directs the charioteer; for though it be an intelligent ſoul, it is only by the aſſiſtance of this eye of love, that it diſcovers the field of truth, and by the faculty that ſerves it inſtead of hands, it curbs and reſtrains the body that is annexed to it, and guiding it with wiſdom, becomes the miſtreſs of it, and turns it towards its own ſelf; to the end that the whole compoſition may be intirely taken up with contemplating the Divinity, and conform itſelf wholly to his image.

This is in general an idea of the abſtinence here ſpoken of, and of all the great good to which it endeavours to lead us. All theſe things are particularly delivered in the holy precepts that have been given us under ſhadows and under veils: and though each of them ordain a particular abſtinence, as from beans among the legumes, among beaſts from the fleſh of ſuch as die of themſelves, though the very kinds be expreſſed, as, "You "ſhall not eat the gurnet," for the fiſh, nor ſuch an animal for the beaſts of the earth,

nor ſuch a bird for the fowls of the air; and though, laſtly, they deſcend even to particularize certain parts, as, "You ſhall not eat "the head, you ſhall not eat the heart;" nevertheleſs in each of theſe precepts the author includes all the perfection of purification; for though he literally forbids ſuch or ſuch a thing, as to bodily abſtinence, by reaſon of certain phyſical properties and virtues; yet in each precept he inſinuates our purgation from all carnal affections, and teaches man to return home to himſelf, that he may bid farewel to this abode of generation and corruption, and take his flight to the Elyſian fields, and to the moſt pure Æther.

Now, the orderly progreſs which the Pythagoreans obſerved in their abſtinence, is the reaſon that we find in their writings ſome ſymbols which at firſt ſight ſeem to contradict one another: for this precept, "Abſtain from "eating the heart," ſeems contrary to this other precept, "Abſtain from eating animals," unleſs we ſay that the firſt, "Abſtain from "eating the heart," was addreſſed to young beginners; and that the laſt, "Abſtain from "eating animals," was injoined only to the perfect; for the abſtinence from any particular part of an animal is ſuperfluous and uſeleſs, when the whole animal is forbid.

We ſhould therefore diligently attend to the order and gradation which the author obſerves: "Abſtain, ſays he, from meats;" and then, as if ſome perſon had aſked him, "from "what meats?" he anſwers, "Which I "have forbidden." And after this he anſwers again, as it were, to this ſecond queſtion; where have the Pythagoreans ſpoken of theſe meats? and in what treatiſes have they injoined this abſtinence? It is, ſays he, "in "the purifications, and in the deliverance "of the ſoul;" thereby artfully inſinuating, that the purgations precede, and that the deliverance of the ſoul follows.

Now, the purgations of the reaſonable ſoul are the mathematical ſciences; and its deliverance which carries it upwards, is the dialectics, which ſcience is the intimate inſpection of beings. This is the reaſon why the author ſays in the ſingular number, "in the deliverance of the ſoul," becauſe the deliverance relates to one ſcience only; and why too he ſays in the plural, "in the purifications," becauſe the mathematics contain ſeveral ſciences.

Now, to all theſe things that have been ſaid in particular concerning the ſoul, in regard to its purification, and to its deliverance, we ought to join things of the like nature with

theſe, and that analogically and proportionably anſwer to them, for the purgation of the luminous body. And hence it neceſſarily follows, that the purgations which are made by the means of the mathematical ſciences, ſhould be accompanied with the myſtical purgations of the initiations; and that the deliverance, which is performed by the dialectics, ſhould be attended by the introduction to what is moſt ſublime and moſt excellent. For theſe are properly the things that purify, and render perfect the ſpiritual chariot of the reaſonable ſoul, that diſingage it from the pollutions and from the diſorder of matter, and that render it fit to converſe with pure ſpirits. For what is impure can have no fellowſhip with what is pure. And as we muſt of neceſſity adorn the ſoul with knowlege and with virtue, that it may be able to converſe with the ſpirits, that are always indued with thoſe qualities; ſo we ought to render pure the luminous body, and to diſintangle it from matter, that it may maintain a communication with luminous bodies: for likeneſs unites all things, whereas diſſimilitude diſunites and ſeparates the things that are the moſt united in regard to their place and ſituation.

This is the due and analogical meaſure

which the Pythagoreans have given us of the most perfect philosophy, for the perfection of the whole man; for whoso takes care of the soul and neglects the body, purges not the intire man; and on the other hand, he who believes it sufficient to take care of the body, without thinking of the soul, or that the care of the body will serve likewise for the soul, without purging it apart, commits the like or a greater fault. But he who takes care of both, perfects his whole self; and by this means philosophy is joined to the mystic art, whose business is to purify the lucid body. And if this art be destitute of a philosophical mind, you will find it has no longer the same virtue; for, of all the things that complete our perfection, some were invented by a philosophical mind, and others were introduced by a mystical operation that conformed itself to that mind.

Now, by mystical operation, I mean the purgative faculty of the luminous body; to the end that of all philosophy the theory may precede as the mind, and the practic follow as the act or faculty. Now, the practic is of two sorts, politic or civil, and mystical. The first purges us of folly by the means of virtue, and the second cuts off all earthly

thoughts by the means of the ſacred ceremonies.

The public laws are a good pattern of civil philoſophy, and the ſacred rites of cities, of the myſtical. Now, the ſublimeſt pitch of all philoſophy is the contemplative mind: the politic mind holds the middle place, and in the laſt is the myſtical. The firſt, in regard to the two others, holds the place of the eye; and the two laſt, in regard to the firſt, hold the place of the hand, and of the foot, but they are all three ſo well linked together, that either of the three is imperfect, and almoſt uſeleſs, without the co-operation of the other two. And therefore we ought always to join together the knowlege that has found out the truth, the faculty that produces virtue, and that which brings forth purity, to the end that the civil actions may be rendered conformable to the mind that preſides, and that the holy actions may be anſwerable to the one and to the other.

Thus you ſee the end of the Pythagorean philoſophy is, that we may become all over wings to ſoar aloft to the divine good, to the end, that at the hour of death, leaving upon earth this mortal body, and diveſting us of its corruptible nature, we may be ready for the celeſtial voyage, like champions in the

ſacred combats of philoſophy; for then we ſhall return to our antient country, and be deified, as far as it is poſſible for men to become gods. And this we are promiſed in the two following verſes.

VERSES LXX. LXXI.

And when, after having diveſted yourſelf of your mortal body, you arrive in the moſt pure Æther,—Then ſhall you be a god, immortal, incorruptible; and death ſhall have no more dominion over you.

BEHOLD the moſt glorious end of all our labours! Behold, as Plato ſays, the glorious combat, and the great hope that is propoſed to us! Behold the moſt perfect fruit of philoſophy! This is the greateſt work, the moſt excellent atchievement of the art of love; that myſterious art of raiſing up to divine good, and of eſtabliſhing in the poſſeſſion of it, of delivering from the afflictions here below, as from the obſcure dungeon of mortal life, of exalting to the celeſtial ſplen-

dors, and of placing in the iſlands of the bleſſed, all who ſhall have walked in the ways which the foregoing rules had taught them. For them and them alone is reſerved the ineſtimable reward of deification; it not being permitted to any to be adopted into the rank of the gods, but to him alone who has acquired for his ſoul virtue and truth, and for his ſpiritual chariot, purity.

Such a man being thereby become ſound and whole, is reſtored to his primitive ſtate, after he has recovered himſelf by his union with ſound reaſon, after he has diſcovered the all-divine ornament of this univerſe, and thus found out the author and creator of all things, as much as it is poſſible for man to find him. And being thus arrived, after his purification, to that ſublime degree of bliſs, which the beings, whoſe nature is incapable of deſcending to generation, always enjoy, he unites himſelf by his knowlege to this WHOLE, and raiſes himſelf up even to God himſelf.

But as he has a body that was created with him, he ſtands in need of a place wherein he may be ſeated, as it were in the rank of the ſtars; and the moſt ſuitable place for a body of ſuch a nature, is the place that is immediately beneath the moon, as being

above all terreſtrial and corruptible bodies, and beneath all the celeſtial: and this place the Pythagoreans call THE PURE ÆTHER: ÆTHER, becauſe it is immaterial and eternal; and PURE, becauſe it is exempt from earthly paſſions.

What ſhall he be then who is arrived there? He ſhall be what theſe verſes promiſe him, "an immortal god;" he ſhall be rendered like the immortal gods, of whom we have ſpoken in the beginning of this treatiſe: an immortal god, I ſay, but not by nature; for, how can it be, that he, who, ſince a certain time only, has made any progreſs in virtue, and whoſe deification has had a beginning, ſhould become equal to the Gods who have been Gods from all eternity? This is impoſſible; and therefore to make this exception, and to mark this difference, the philoſopher, after he had ſaid, "You ſhall be an immortal god," adds, "incorruptible, and no more ſubject to death;" thereby intimating, that it is a deification which proceeds only from our being diveſted of what is mortal, and is not a privilege annexed to our nature and to our eſſence; but to which we arrive by little and little, and by degrees; ſo that it makes a third ſort of gods; who are immortal when they are

aſcended into heaven; but mortal when they deſcend upon the earth; and in this always inferior to the illuſtrious heroes. Theſe laſt remember God always; but the firſt ſometimes forget him: for it is not poſſible that the third kind, though rendered perfect, ſhould ever be ſuperior to the ſecond, or equal to the firſt, but containing always the third, they become like the firſt, though they are ſubordinate to the ſecond. For the reſemblance, which, by reaſon of their union or familiarity, if I may ſo ſay, with the celeſtial Gods, men have to them, is more perfect and more natural in the beings of the ſecond rank, that is, in the illuſtrious heroes.

Thus there is but one and the ſame perfection common to all intelligent beings, which is their reſemblance of God who created them: but ſee what makes the difference; this perfection is conſtant and uniform in the celeſtial *; conſtant, but not always uniform in the æthereal, who are fixed and permanent in their ſtate and condition †; but neither the one or the other in the æthereal, who are ſubject to deſcend and to come and inhabit the earth ‡. If any man ſhould aſſert, that the firſt and moſt perfect

* Immortal Gods. † Illuſtrious heroes.
‡ The ſouls of men.

likeneſs of God is "the copy and the origi-" nal of the two others," or that the ſecond is of the third, his aſſertion would be very juſt. Our aim is not only to reſemble God, but to reſemble him by approaching the neareſt we can to this all-perfect original, or to arrive to the ſecond reſemblance: but if not being able to attain to this moſt perfect reſemblance, we acquire that of which we are capable, we have, as well as the moſt perfect beings, all that our nature requires; and we enjoy the perfect fruits of virtue even in this, that we know the meaſure and extent of our eſſence, and that we are not diſſatisfied at it: for the perfection of virtue is to keep ourſelves within the limits of the creation, by which all things are diſtinguiſhed and ranked according to their kinds; and to ſubmit ourſelves to the laws of providence, which has diſtributed to each individual the good that is proper for it, in regard to its faculties and to its virtues.

This is the COMMENTARY we have thought fit to make on theſe GOLDEN VERSES; and that may be called a ſummary, neither too prolix nor too ſuccinct, of the doctrine of Pythagoras. It was not fitting, either that our explication ſhould imitate the brevity of the

text, for then we ſhould have left many things obſcure, and ſhould not have been able to diſcover and ſhew the reaſons and the beauties of all the precepts; or that it ſhould contain all this philoſophy, for that would have been too large and too tedious a work for a commentary: but we thought it proper to proportion this work, as much as we could, to the ſenſe of theſe verſes, reciting no more of the general precepts of Pythagoras, than what was conſonant and might ſerve to the explication of theſe GOLDEN VERSES, which are properly only a moſt perfect character of his philoſophy, an abrigement of his principal tenets, and the elements of perfection, which they who have walked in the ways of God, and whoſe virtues have raiſed them up to heaven, to the ſupreme felicity, have left to inſtruct their deſcendants; elements which may juſtly be called the greateſt and moſt excellent mark of the nobleneſs of man, and which are not the private opinion of any particular perſon, but the doctrine of the whole ſacred body of the Pythagoreans, and, as it were, the common voice of all their aſſemblies. For this reaſon there was a law which enjoined each of them, every morning when he roſe, and every night at his going to bed, to make

theſe verſes be read to him as the oracles of the Pythagorean doctrine, to the end that by the continual meditation of theſe precepts, the ſpirit and energy of them might ſhine forth in his life. And this is what we likewiſe ought to do, that we may make trial, and find what great advantages we ſhould in time gain by ſo doing.

THE END.

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FINIS.

MVSEVM
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NICVM

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leads our life, is the ſpirit that forms our underſtanding. The mind is our eye, and all the faculties of the mind ſee every thing according to the ſtate the mind is in. If ſelfiſh pride is the ſpirit of our life, every thing is only ſeen, and known, through this glaſs; every thing is dark, ſenſeleſs, and abſurd, to the proud man, but that which brings food to this ſpirit: he underſtands nothing, feels nothing, taſtes nothing, but as his pride is made ſenſible of it, or capable of being affected with it. His working will, which is the life of his ſoul, liveth and worketh only in the element of pride; and, therefore, what ſuits his pride, is his only good; and what contradicts his pride, is all the evil that he can feel or know: his wit, his parts, his learning, his advancement, his friends, his admirers, his ſucceſſes, his conqueſts, all theſe are the only God and heaven, that he has any living perception of: he indeed can talk of a Scripture God, a Scripture Chriſt, and heaven; but theſe are only the ornamental furniture of his brain, whilſt pride is the God of his heart. We are told, that "*GOD reſiſteth* "*the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*" This is not to be underſtood, as if GOD, by an arbitrary will, only choſe to deal thus with the proud and humble man. But the true ground is this; the reſiſtance is on the part of man. Pride reſiſteth GOD, it rejecteth him, it turneth from him, and chooſeth to worſhip and adore ſomething elſe inſtead of him: whereas humility leaveth all for GOD, falls down before him, and opens the whole heart to receive him. This is the only ſenſe, in which "*GOD* "*reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*" And thus it is in the true ground of every good and evil that riſes up in us; we have neither good nor evil, but as it is the natural effect of the working of our own will, either with, or againſt GOD. Con-

ſider

ſider the ſtate of him, whoſe working will is under the power of wrath; he ſees, and hears, and feels, and underſtands, and talks, wholly from the light and ſenſe of wrath. All his faculties are only ſo many faculties of wrath; and he has no ſenſe or knowledge, but what his enlightened wrath diſcovers to him. Theſe inſtances are ſufficient to ſhew, that the ſtate of our life governs the ſtate of our mind, and forms the degree and manner of our underſtanding and knowledge; and that, therefore, there is no poſſibility of knowing GOD and DIVINE TRUTH, till our life is DIVINE, and wholly dead to the life and ſpirit of this world.

The philoſophers of old began all their virtue, in a total renunciation of the ſpirit of this world. They ſaw, with the eyes of heaven, that darkneſs was not more contrary to light, than the wiſdom of this world was contrary to the Spirit of Virtue: therefore, they allowed of no progreſs in virtue, but ſo far as a man had overcome himſelf, and the ſpirit of this world. This gave a Divine ſolidity to all their inſtructions, and proved them to be maſters of True Wiſdom. But the doctrine of THE CROSS OF CHRIST, the laſt, the higheſt, the finiſhing ſtroke given to the ſpirit of this world, that ſpeaks more in one word than all the philoſophy of voluminous writers; is yet profeſſed by thoſe, who are in more friendſhip with the world, than was allowed to the diſciples of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, or Epictetus. Nay, if thoſe antient ſages were to ſtart up amongſt us with their Divine Wiſdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the Sons of THE GOSPEL, if not by ſome Fathers of the Church, as dreaming enthuſiaſts. But it is a ſtanding truth, that "*the world can only love its own, and* WISDOM "*can only be juſtified of her children.*" The Heaven-born Epictetus told one of his ſcholars, that "then "he

" he might firſt look upon himſelf, as having made " ſome true proficiency in Virtue, when the world " took him for a fool;" an oracle like that, which ſaid, " *the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with* " GOD."

If it be aſked, " What is the apoſtaſy of theſe " laſt times, or whence is the degeneracy of the " preſent Chriſtian church?" it is all the progeny of a worldly ſpirit. If here we ſee open wickedneſs, there only forms of godlineſs; if here ſuperficial holineſs, political piety, crafty prudence; there haughty ſanctity, partial zeal, envious orthodoxy: if, almoſt every where, we find a Jewiſh blindneſs, and hardneſs of heart; and the church trading with the Goſpel, as viſibly as the old Jews bought and ſold beaſts in their temple: all this is only ſo many forms and proper fruits of the worldly ſpirit. This is the great chain with which the Devil enſlaves mankind; and every ſon of man is held captive in it, till through, and by, THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST he breaks from it. Nothing elſe can deliver him from it: nothing leaves the world, nothing renounces it, nothing can poſſibly overcome it, but THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. Hence it is, that many learned men, with all the rich furniture of their brain, live and die ſlaves to the ſpirit of this world; and can only differ from groſs worldlings, as the ſcribes and phariſees differed from publicans and ſinners: it is becauſe THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST is not the one only thing that is the deſire of their hearts; and, therefore, their learning only works in and with the ſpirit of this world, and becomes itſelf no ſmall part of the " vanity of vanities."

" Nothing does, or can, keep GOD out of the " ſoul, or hinder HIS HOLY UNION with it, but its " deſire turned from him:" for with whatever the

will worketh, with that only the ſoul liveth, whether it be GOD or the creature. Whatever the ſoul deſireth, that is the fewel of its fire; and as its fewel is, ſo is the flame of its life. A will given up to earthly enjoyments, is at graſs with Nebuchadnezzar, and has one life with the beaſts of the field; for earthly deſires keep up the ſame life in a man and an ox. For the one only reaſon, why the animals of this world have no ſenſe or knowledge of GOD, is becauſe they cannot form any other than earthly deſires, and ſo can only have an earthly life: when, therefore, a man wholly turneth his will to earthly deſires, he dies to the excellency of his natural ſtate, and may be ſaid only to live, and move, and have his being in the life of this world, as the beaſts have. Earthly food, *&c.* only deſired, and uſed, for the ſupport of the earthly body, is ſuitable to man's preſent condition, and the order of nature: but when the deſire and delight of the ſoul are ſet upon earthly things, the humanity is degraded; is fallen from GOD; and the life of the ſoul is made as earthly and beſtial, as the life of the body: for the creature can be neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worſe, than as its will worketh. What it deſireth, that it taketh; and of that it eateth and liveth: wherever, and in whatever, the will chooſeth to dwell and delight, that becometh the ſoul's food, its condition, its body, its cloathing and habitation. Nothing doth, or can, go with a man into heaven, nothing followeth him into hell, but that in which the will dwelt, with which it was fed, nouriſhed, and cloathed, in this life. Death can make no alteration of this ſtate of the will; it only takes off the outward worldly covering of fleſh and blood, and forces the ſoul to ſee, and feel, and know, what a life, what

a ſtate, food, body, and habitation, its own working will has brought forth for it. Is there, therefore, any thing in life that deſerves a thought, but how to keep this working of our will in a right ſtate; and to get that PURITY OF HEART, which alone can ſee, and know, and find, and poſſeſs GOD? Is there any thing ſo frightful as this worldly ſpirit, which turns the ſoul from GOD; makes it a houſe of darkneſs; and feeds it with the food of time, at the expence of the riches of eternity?

Now, as the whole nature of the GOSPEL REDEMPTION means nothing, but the one, true, and only poſſible way, of delivering man from all the evil of his fall—a fall demonſtrable to the ſenſes and underſtanding of every man, by every height and depth of nature, by every kind of evil ſin and miſery in the world, by every thing he knows of GOD, himſelf, and the world he lives in; Chriſtianity is not only the moſt deſireable thing that the heart of man can think of, but the moſt intelligible, and even ſelf-evident. It requires not the aid of learning for its ſupport; it ſtands upon a foundation ſuperiour to human learning, and may be the ſure poſſeſſion of every plain man, who has ſenſe enough to know, whether he is happy or unhappy, good or evil. For this natural knowledge, if adhered to, is every man's ſure guide to that ONE SALVATION preached by the goſpel; which goſpel ſtands in no more need of learning and critical art now, than it did when CHRIST was preaching it upon earth. How abſurd would it have been for any critics in Greek and Hebrew, to have followed CHRIST and his apoſtles, as neceſſary explainers of their words, which called for nothing in the hearers, but penitent hearts turned to GOD; and declared, that "*they* only "*who were of GOD, could hear the word of GOD!*" If none but learned men have the true fitneſs to underſtand

derſtand the word of ſcripture, and the plain man is to receive it from them; how muſt he know, which are the ſcholars that have the right knowledge? whence is he to have his information? For no one need be told, that, ever ſince learning has born rule in the church, learned doctors have contradicted and condemned each other, in every eſſential point of the Chriſtian doctrine: thouſands of learned men tell the illiterate, they are loſt in this or that church; and thouſands of learned men tell them, they are loſt if they leave it. If, therefore, Chriſtianity is in the hands of ſcholars, how muſt the plain man come at it? Muſt he, though unable to underſtand ſcripture for want of learning, tell which learned man is in the right, and which is not? If ſo, the unlearned man muſt have far the greateſt ability, ſince he is to do that for ſcholars, which they cannot do for themſelves.

But Chriſtian Redemption is GOD's MERCY TO ALL MANKIND; and every fallen man, as ſuch, has a fitneſs or capacity to lay hold of it. It has no dependence upon times and places, or the ages and ſeveral conditions of the world, or any outward circumſtance of life; as the firſt man partook of it, ſo muſt the laſt: the learned linguiſt, the blind, the deaf and dumb, have but one and the ſame common way of finding life in it; and he that writes large commentaries upon the Bible, muſt be ſaved by ſomething full as different from book-knowledge, as he who can neither write nor read.

For this ſalvation, which is GOD's mercy to the fallen ſoul of man, merely as fallen, muſt be ſomething that meets every man; and to which every man, as fallen, has ſomething that directs him to turn. For as the fall of man is the reaſon of this mercy, ſo the fall muſt be the guide to it: the want muſt ſhew the thing that is wanted. And, therefore,

fore, the manifeſtation of this one ſalvation, or mercy to man, muſt have a nature ſuitable, not to this or that great reader of hiſtory, or able critic in Hebrew roots and Greek phraſes, but ſuitable to the common ſtate and condition of every ſon of Adam. It muſt be ſomething as grounded in human nature, as the fall itſelf is; which wants no art to make it known, but to which the common nature of man is the ſure and only guide, in one man as well as another. Now this ſomething, which is thus obvious to every man, and which opens the way to Chriſtian redemption in every ſoul, is "A ſenſe of "the vanity and miſery of this world; and a prayer "of faith and hope to GOD, to be raiſed to a "better ſtate."

In this ſenſe, to which every man's own nature leads him, lies the whole of man's ſalvation; here the mercy of GOD, and the miſery of man, are met together; here the fall and the redemption kiſs each other. This is the chriſtianity which is as old as the fall; which alone ſaved the firſt man, and can alone ſave the laſt. This is it, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and which fulfils them both; for they have only this end, to turn man from the luſts of this life to a deſire, and faith, and hope of a better. Thus does the whole of Chriſtian Redemption, conſidered on the part of man, ſtand in the ſame degree of nearneſs and plainneſs to all mankind: it is as ſimple and plain, as the feeling our own evil and miſery; and as natural, as the deſire of being ſaved and delivered from it.

This deſire and faith and hope of A NEW LIFE BORN OF GOD, as our only poſſible redemption and ſalvation, is THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER, that is as oppoſite to the ſpirit of this world, as heaven is to hell: the one goes upwards with the ſame ſtrength as the other goes downwards; the one eſpouſes and unites

unites us to CHRIST and GOD, with the ſame certainty, as the other betroths and weds us to an earthly nature. The Spirit of Prayer is a preſſing forth of the ſoul out of this earthly life; it is a ſtretching, with all its deſire, after THE LIFE OF GOD; it is a leaving, as far as it can, all its own ſpirit, to receive a ſpirit from ABOVE, to be One Life, One Love, One Spirit with CHRIST IN GOD. This Prayer, which is an emptying itſelf of all its own luſts and natural tempers, and an opening itſelf for the light and love of GOD to enter into it, is the prayer in "*the name of* CHRIST," to which nothing is denied: for the love which GOD bears to the ſoul, his eternal never-ceaſing deſire to enter into it, to dwell in it, and open the birth of his HOLY WORD and SPIRIT in it, ſtays no longer, than till the heart opens to receive him. For "nothing "does, or can, keep GOD out of the ſoul, or "hinder HIS HOLY UNION WITH IT, but the de- "ſire of the heart turned from him."

What, therefore, is ſo neceſſary for man, as, with all his ſtrength, to turn from every thing, that is not GOD, and his holy will; and with all the deſire, delight, and longing of the heart, to give up himſelf wholly to THE LIFE, LIGHT, AND SPIRIT OF GOD; pleaſed with nothing in this world, but as it gives time, and place, and occaſions, of doing and being that, which his Heavenly Father would have him to do, and be; ſeeking for no happineſs from this earthly fallen life, but that of overcoming all its ſpirit and tempers?

To conclude: in the full and true knowledge of the greatneſs of our fall, and the greatneſs of our redemption, lie all the reaſons of a deep humility, penitence, and ſelf-denial; and alſo all the motives and incitements to a moſt hearty, ſincere, and total converſion to GOD: and every one is neceſſarily more

more or leſs a true penitent, and more or leſs truly converted to GOD, according as he is more or leſs deeply or inwardly ſenſible of theſe truths. And till theſe two great truths have both awakened and enlightened our minds, all reformation and pretence to amendment, is but a dead and ſuperficial thing; a mere garment of hypocriſy, to hide us from ourſelves and others.

Nothing can truly awaken a ſinner, but a true ſenſe of the deep poſſeſſion and power that ſin has in him. When he ſees, that ſin begins with his being, that it riſes up in the eſſences of his nature, and lives in the firſt forms of his life; and that he lies thus chained and barred up in the very jaws of death and hell, as unable to alter his own ſtate as to create another creature: when, with this knowledge, he ſees that the Free Grace of GOD has provided him a remedy equal to his diſtreſs; that he has given him the Holy Blood and Life of JESUS CHRIST, the TRUE SON OF GOD, to enter as deep into his ſoul as ſin has entered, to change the firſt forms and eſſences of his life, and bring forth in them a NEW BIRTH OF A DIVINE NATURE, that is to be an Immortal Image of THE HOLY TRINITY, everlaſtingly ſafe, enriched, and bleſſed, in the Boſom of FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST; when a man once truly knows and feels theſe two truths, there ſeems to be no more that you need do for him. You can tell him of no humility, or penitence, or ſelf-abaſement, but what is leſs than his own heart ſuggeſts to him: humility can only be feigned or falſe, before this conviction: he can now no more take any degree of good to himſelf, than aſſume any ſhare in the creation of angels; and all pride or ſelf-eſteem of any kind, ſeems to him to contain as great a lye in it, as if he was to ſay, that he helped to create himſelf. You need not tell him, that he muſt

muſt turn unto GOD with "*all his ſtrength, all* "*his heart, all his ſoul, and all his ſpirit*;" for all that he can offer unto GOD, ſeems to him already leſs than the leaſt of his mercies towards him. He has ſo ſeen the exceeding love of GOD in the manner and degree of his REDEMPTION, that it would be the greateſt pain to him, to do any thing but upon a motive of DIVINE LOVE: as his ſoul has found GOD to be All Love; ſo it has but one deſire, and that is, to be itſelf All Love of GOD.

This is the conviction and converſion that neceſſarily ariſes from a right underſtanding of theſe truths: the ſoul is thereby wholly conſecrated to GOD; and can like, or love, or do nothing, but what it can, ſome way or other, turn into a ſervice of love towards him: but where theſe truths are not known, or not acknowledged; there it is not to be wondered at, if religion has no root, that is able to bring forth its proper fruits. And if the generality of Chriſtians are a number of dead, ſuperficial, conſenters to the hiſtory of ſcripture doctrines, as unwilling to have the ſpirit, as to part with the form of their religion, loth to hear of any kind of ſelf-denial, fond of worldly eaſe, indulgence and riches, unwilling to be called to the perfection of the goſpel, profeſſing and practiſing religion merely as the faſhion and cuſtom of the place they are in requires; if ſome reſt in outward forms, others in a certain orthodoxy of opinions; if ſome expect to be ſaved by the goodneſs of the ſect they are of, others by a certain change of their outward behaviour; if ſome content themſelves with a lukewarm ſpirit, and others depend upon their own works; theſe are deluſions that muſt happen to all, who do not know, in ſome good degree, the true nature of their own fallen ſoul, and what kind of regeneration alone can ſave them.

But

But all theſe errours, deluſions, and falſe reſts, are cut up by the root, as ſoon as a man knows the true reaſon and neceſſity of his wanting ſo GREAT A SAVIOUR. For he that knows the eſſences of his ſoul to be ſo many eſſences of ſin, which form ſin as they form his life; entirely incapable of producing any good, till a birth from GOD has ariſen in them; can neither place his redemption where it is not, nor ſeek it cooly and negligently where it is.

For knowing that it is the hell within his own nature, that only wants to be deſtroyed, he is intent only upon bringing deſtruction upon that; and this ſecures him from falſe religion.

And knowing that this inward hell cannot be deſtroyed, unleſs GOD becomes his REDEEMER, or REGENERATOR, in the eſſences of his ſoul; this makes him believe all, expect all, and hope all, from his Saviour JESUS CHRIST alone.

And knowing, that all this redemption, or ſalvation, is to be brought about in the inmoſt ground and depth of his heart; this makes him always apply to GOD, as the GOD of his heart: and, therefore, what he offers to GOD, is his own heart; and this keeps him always ſpiritually alive, wholly employed and intent upon the true work of religion, the fitting and preparing his heart for all the operations of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT upon it. And ſo he is a TRUE INWARD CHRISTIAN, who, as our Bleſſed LORD ſpeaks, has "*The kingdom of* "*GOD within him*," where the ſtate and habit of his heart continually thankfully "WORSHIPS THE "FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

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